California's Computer Magazine

VOL. 2, NO. 2 • FEBRUARY 1985

MicroTimes™

Macintosh:
One Year Later

Barbara Leone:
Introducing the
Macintosh to the
Business World

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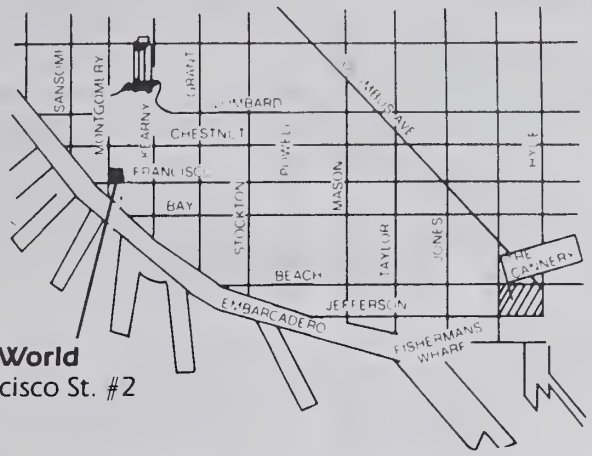

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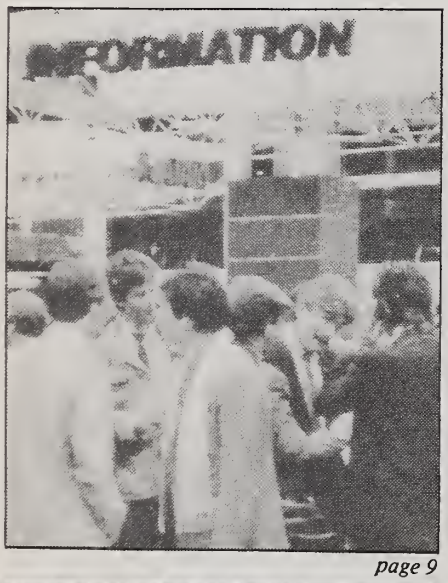
As Apple's Macintosh celebrates its first birthday, many of the doubts raised about its viability and usefulness have been laid to rest and many computer-shy consumers have taken the Mac to heart. In our cover story this month, MICROTIMES visits with some Mac users who've discovered applications for the machine that go far beyond *MacPaint* and previews some of the business-office developments premiered by Apple at its January shareholders' meeting.

In other stories, Pat Hamilton takes those of you who weren't among the 90,000 visitors to the CES show on a tour of the event, and Ken Goehner discusses laser printers, which are likely to revolutionize the field of graphics.

Also revolutionizing the graphics field is *PC Paint,* discussed last issue. Now the developers of *PC Paint* and MICROTIMES are jointly sponsoring a *PC Paint* Swap Line, the object being to form an extensive database of available artwork done with the program. For information call (714) 545-8100.

Loose ends dept.: in response to numerous questions, the phone number of the Blind Apple User's Discussion Group (BAUD), mentioned last issue, is (516) 433-0171. And abject apologies are in order to Kurt Young, whose name was misspelled in the caption of his photo, and Ann Summa, whose excellent photos of Peter McWilliams weren't captioned at all.



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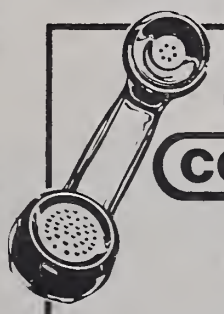

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EDIT MODE

By Don Hamilton

New From Atari

Atari XE Family
64XEM PERSONAL COMPUTER
65,536 bytes of RAM

65XEP PORTABLE PERSONAL COMPUTER
65,536 bytes of RAM

130XE PERSONAL COMPUTER
131,072 bytes of RAM

For graphics, these machines have 320x192 pixel color resolution, 11 graphics modes, and 256 colors. The systems have collision detection graphics. For text, there are 5 modes available, and fine horizontal and vertical screen scrolling.

The architecture for the new Atari is driven by the 6502C microprocessor with a clock speed of 1.79MHz with custom graphics, sound chips and an integrated self-test program.

The music and sound system for the Atari allows a vast range of sound or music to be created. There are four independent sound voices.

If all this sounds like the Atari you know and love, you're on target, because these systems are compatible with the older XL systems.

MacTari

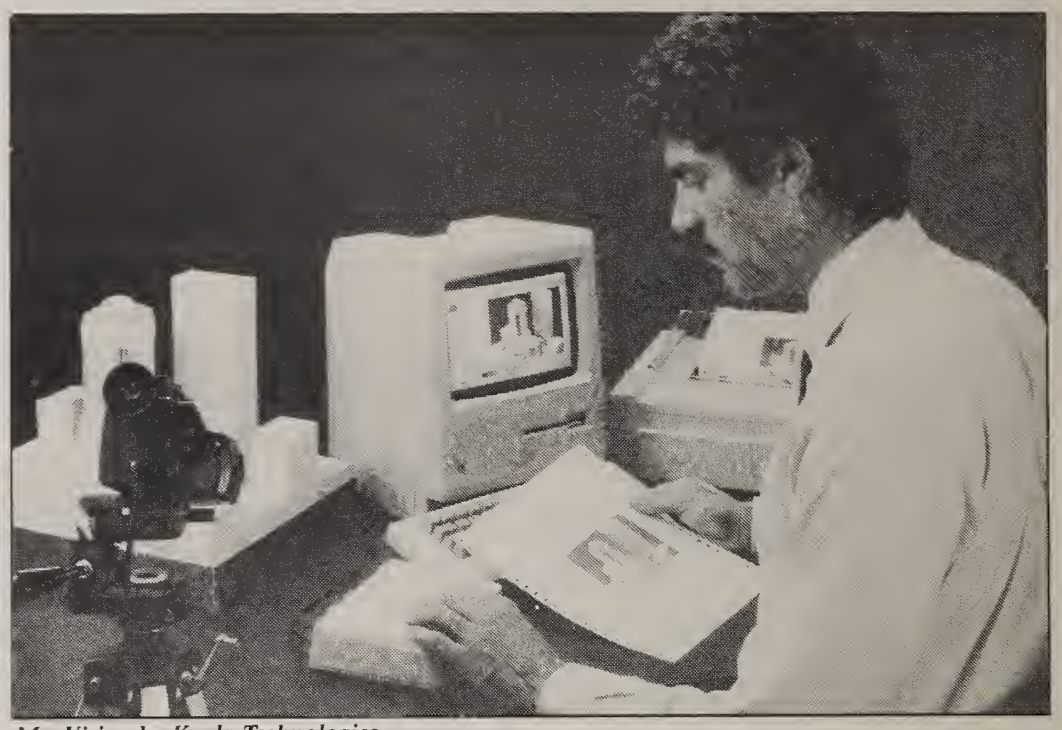
The 130ST and the 520ST are Atari versions of the Macintosh. According to rumor, the price is much lower than the Apple Macintosh — about $600 for the 512K version.

The system demonstrated at the CES show in Las Vegas was the 16/32 bit Motorola 68000 microprocessor.

One drawback: Macintosh software will apparently not run on the new Ataris. It is rumored that 70 percent of the Macintosh software will be convertible to the Atari ST series.

Bernoulli Box

The Bernoulli Box from Iomega combines the convenience of a floppy disk system and the mass-storage of hard drive. No more leaving your disk with important data on the computer for the next user to accidentally reformat in a fit of learning. If you have a very large confidential data base, you can pull out the cartridge when you are finished and lock it in your file cabinet. The cartridges sell for approximately $50.00, which, if you divide by the unit of data stored on a standard floppy, is a pretty fair deal.



MacVision by Koala Technologies

Simplicity Sells

IBM probably takes in more total dollars on slightly fewer systems sold than Apple. What this means is that many of the home market, educational, and small business people still prefer the Apple to the IBM products. Apple continues to be the only company that effectively bridges the home and small business market with the same computer.

Commodore is entering Apple's market with the new 128 personal computer. The 128 will run CP/M mode and all C-64 software currently on the market. According to Commodore, the computer will determine the version of CP/M you are booting and configure itself. This is what the home user needs: simplicity.

Alas, simplicity seems to be a popular movement. Witness Atari's new entries into the field, big enough to be business computers but simple to use and learn. Have you noticed how many new programs use a mouse and have developed their own version of the copyrighted Macintosh operating system?

If Atari and Commodore *market* all the products that they showed at CES, at the rumored prices, the computer industry is again in for a downward price battle. The resulting price competition could cause IBM and Apple to substantially reduce their current model prices.

Radio Shack 200

The Model 200 has arrived. Rumors have abounded about this computer. With new IBM-compatible briefcase computers coming to market now, I think everyone expected the same from Radio Shack.

Well, it's *not* IBM-compatible, but I'm not unhappy. I think they did the right thing. It's a briefcase computer that really fits into a briefcase. The screen is big enough, at 40x16, to be easily read.

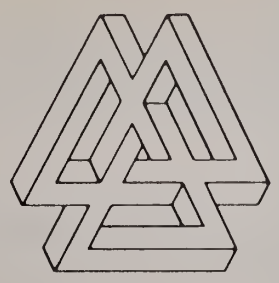
The Tandy 200 will sell for $999. It will have 24K of RAM, a 300 Baud modem and a small version of the popular Multiplan in ROM. Best of all, it only weighs 4.5 pounds. For that price, a little more RAM would have been well received, though.

Computers on the Slopes

Mammoth Ski Area has a new computerized locker system, just outside Warming Hut II on the slope side. The new system has a canvas roof and approximately 500 lockers. When you purchase a locker, it's yours for 6 hours of in and out, whenever you want, without more money, because the computer remembers who you are.

The problem being solved here (other than the simple and constant shortage of lockers) is when you come in for coffee or to powder your nose, it's nice to lock up your skis without searching for more quarters.

At the new lockers you insert a dollar, and the computer randomly assigns you a locker. The computer asks you for a four digit number code. I use one of my long-time secret unbreakable codes. Using the first four digits of your home phone is also a good idea in case you lose the receipt. The warning on the bottom of the receipt states: "WARNING-LOCKER AUTOMATICALLY OPENS AT END OF RESERVED TIME THANK YOU." With this locker you can take your skis in and out all day long without any more money, just by punching in your number to open it and pushing it shut when finished.



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Coleco on Adam

Mort Handel, Executive Vice President of Corporate Communications for Coleco, said that they would not produce any more Adam computers, but that they would support the systems they sold to the extent they felt would meet their commitment to their customers.

Mr. Handel said the main reason for the demise of the Adam was the press.

Software for $9.99

Mastertronic International has become England's number one software producer through a simple formula which the company hopes will work here: low, low prices. Preliminary looks at some of the $9.99 software revealed a good product for a great price.

Koala's New MacVision

Koala Technologies Corp. has introduced a digital imaging system for the Apple Macintosh called *MacVision*. This new product represents a convenient alternative to developing and incorporating pictures and graphic materials into business software applications.

Steven Justein of Mastertronics. Photo: Pat Hamilton

Some fun and/or productive work can be done with this unit when it's combined with *MacWrite*, *MacPaint* or another Macintosh application. Koala's *MacVision* digitizes a video image from any standard video source. Images captured through the *MacVision* system can be "retouched" or enhanced using *MacPaint*. Other software can be used to add text, edit and electronically transmit the digitized image. Printouts can be made on any Macintosh-compatible printer.

Eagle Computers Inc.

Eagle Computer survived another round with its creditors. Eagle convinced its creditors to bet on the Eagle by trading their debt for stock in the company. This is not a bad bet for the creditors, because they were not being paid anyway. If Eagle does recover, the creditors have made a very good move indeed.

Mac "Test Drive"

We found mixed emotion about this campaign among retailers. Some say that when a customer comes into the store, retailers want to make the sale right then rather than wait. With some profit margins so thin, these retailers do not want to spend too much time on the sale.

Others maintain that most customers buy the computer anyway, so they just let them keep the same machine they borrowed. If they didn't buy, the next customer got the same machine.

In general, most retailers we talked to thought the program was good. □

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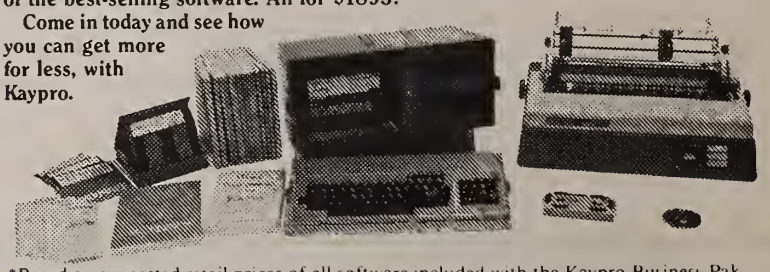

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CONSUMER ELECTRONICS WINTER SHOW 1985

By Pat Hamilton

The convention floor at CES. Photo: Don Han

Where were you the weekend of January 5th and 6th? If you weren't in Las Vegas at the CES, you were in the minority. Estimates are that over 90,000 avid computer and electronic retailers stormed the streets, casinos and convention centers for the four-day show beginning January 5th.

The flavor of CES was different from that of the Comdex show hosted in Las Vegas in November, definitely more upbeat. The general "feeling" on the convention center floor was one of excitement and anticipation. The booths were bustling with excitement — especially those of Atari and Commodore.

The **Atari** booth housed two new computer systems and a host of new peripherals. "Power without the price" was the introductory campaign for Atari's new XE™ series announced by Mr. Jack Tramiel, Chairman of the Board for Atari Corp. "As with all Atari products, consumers will receive the greatest value for their dollar," stated Tramiel in his news release. The newly unveiled family of 8-Bit personal computers are 100% compatible with all XL peripherals *and* software. The newly designed 65 XE™ will have 65,536 bytes of RAM, 11 graphic modes, 256 colors, four independent sound voices and built in BASIC programming.

The new 130 ST™ and 520 ST™

claim to be powerful and affordable and utilize a 16/32 Bit MC68000 microprocessor. They have 131,872 and 524,288 bytes of RAM respectively, and 512 colors. To complement this family of computers, Atari is also introducing a new line of compatible 3½" disk drives, printers, RGB color monitors, and other peripherals. Sound surprisingly like a Macintosh? Well, Atari may call it the 520 ST but its christened name on the convention floor was "The Mactari!"

What about this "power without the price"? Atari would *not* commit to any prices, but it is rumored that the 65 XE will sell for about $120 and the 520 ST for about $600. Unbelievable? We'll have to wait and see...

The **Commodore** booth was abustle with excitement too as they unveiled the Commodore 128 personal computer — expandable to 512K. The Commodore 128 has 128K RAM, 40/80 column full color display, ability to run off-the-shelf CP/M software, compatibility with all C-64 peripherals and over 6,000 software programs. It features a 92-key keyboard including a numeric keypad, and can operate with an optional mouse. According to Marshall Smith, President of Commodore International, Ltd., "The Commodore 128 personal computer will be available in spring of 1985." The popular *Perfect*™ Series of software, including *Perfect Writer*™, *Perfect Calc*™ and *Perfect Filer*™ by Thorn EMI Computer Software, Inc., operates on the new Commodore 128.

To add to the excitement, Commodore was not releasing any press kits or information at their booth, although their new systems were on display. The true unveiling took place at Liberace's on Saturday evening where spokesman Frank Leonardi, Vice President of Marketing for Commodore, quoted their slogan, "Bad News for IBM and Apple!" He also announced that Commodore's national service network for new computers will be over 2000 stores strong, including RCA and Sears. "The Commodore 128 will be targeted at the $300 market," according to Leonardi.

Commodore also introduced the Commodore LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) personal computer. This lightweight (approximately three pound) computer is briefcase size, comes complete with built-in software applications, a 300 baud auto-answer/auto-dial modem, 32K RAM and an 80 column by 16 line LCD screen. It features a 72-key keyboard with eight programmable function keys and four cursor keys; it can run on AA alkaline batteries or use external power. The portable computer is fully compatible with Commodore serial peripherals. "The Commodore LCD leads the industry by offering more power, greater flexibility and larger screen imaging at an extremely attractive price," commented Leonardi. Commodore promises the LCD will be available the first half of 1985.

Mastertronic, a software house new to the shores of the U.S., was crowded with suspicious onlookers watching to see what their advertised price of $9.99 would really buy them these days in the large software marketplace. According to spokesman Steven Justein, "Mastertronic started in England in April of 1984. We have become a top selling computer game company mainly because of our $9.99 price point. Our games are high quality, and we sell adventure, educational and arcade games. The idea has just taken off like crazy. From England we went to Canada and we sold 140,000 units starting in September. The market just hasn't seen good, continuous $9.99 product. Now we are launching our products in the United States and getting in with some mass merchandisers. The idea is really catching on because kids just don't have $40.00 to spend on a piece of software." Mastertronic currently has software available for Apple and Commodore and plan to become available for the MSX as soon as it is available. Mr. Justein went on to explain, "Kids have Apples and Commodores and we sell to kids." Mastertronic just opened their New York office and began launching their campaign in the US from the CES show.

We moved on to the **Bantam Books** display booth which now housed electronic software as well as books. When asked why Bantam had waited so long to get into the field, Mr. Louis Wolfe, President and CEO of Bantam, explained, "Because we wanted to do it right. I have never believed you have to be the first in. First you walk and then you run. This is a new business and, as everyone knows, there have been more failures than successes at it. We don't intend to fail! Since this is not our only business, we can afford the luxury of doing it slowly and smartly. We are relating our software, at least the first seven pieces, to books, which is the business we know best. I was naive enough to think that you write a program, you put it in a 'converting machine' and out comes the program for IBM if you've written it for the Apple. I've learned, of course, that it doesn't work that way."

MICROTIMES asked Mr. Wolfe if he thought the outlook for 1985 would be brighter than for 1984 and he replied, "1984 was the best year ever in our then-39-year history, so it's difficult to say, but we appear on our way to another record-breaking year. I wouldn't forecast what '85 will bring since economists can't even do that."

Mr. Kenzi Sugihara, Director of Electronic Publishing at Bantam, plans the release of its first line of software for the home in March 1985. In preparation since late 1983, the first seven titles will be published in three separate series; *Selfware*™, a line of self-improvement software for adults, *Microworkshop Series*™, learning games for children, and *Living Literature*™, interactive fiction for all ages. Their programs will support the Apple, Commodore and IBM.

"Publishing software is an intuitive process as well as rational process," according to Sugihara. "In terms of developers, we are gaining experience to know the personalities of each of those companies. We may consult with the author of a best-selling book while developing the software through an independent house. Ideally we want to become involved with the development of the software and be sure it has the integrity of following the author's intent."

Parker Brothers, a familiar household word associated with board games, was introducing their new *Clue* game. No, it isn't an enhanced version of the old best selling board game, but a VCR version. According to Bitsy McKay, Marketing Director/New Ventures from Parker Brothers, "VCR is our effort to get into a piece of the electronic market. We are introducing the *Clue* VCR game now and anticipate coming out with more games. We thought it advantageous, while a little premature with the product in the state that is currently in, to bring it here so the electronic industry knew that we are *not* completely out of the electronic market. Our target market is teen to adult

The new VCR version of *Clue* involves so much observation and deductive skills (rather than *just* deduction as the board game does) that it is aimed at the adult population. In the *Clue* board game "A murder has been committed," but in the VCR version *multiple* murders have been commited. There are 18 distinct mystery cases, three separate visual tracks and six games played against each of the different tracks.

Music filled the convention center Sunday as Matthew Stern, President of **Entech**, awarded the first **Studio 64 Music Award** to Louis "Bones" Harris for his musical creation, "Melting Pot."

According to Lindsay Swartz, Director of Legal Affairs for **Batteries Included**, "1984 was a bad year but '85 will be better. 1984 has been a VCR year, so computer sales have been off." When asked about the new Atari line, Lindsay stated, "Atari is revolutionary in pricing this year, not in technology."

Standing in front of the **INFOCOM** booth, we met Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, helping the interactive fiction software game based on his book of the same title.

INFOCOM hosted a **Murder-To-Go**™ party at the Hart Mansion in Las Vegas on Sunday night, January 6, 1985 to announce their newest addition into the world of interactive fiction whodunits, *Suspect*™. In *Suspect*, their third release in the mystery series, you take the role of a newspaper reporter invited to a high society ball. There were approximately 300 of us "reporters" in attendance that cool Las Vegas evening to watch the clues unfold. The stage was set and the actors and actresses, attired in black tuxes and evening gowns, began unraveling the sordid and mysterious circumstances surrounding our host Jonathan Smith's not-so-innocent lifestyle.

Soon the accusations began to fly and the next thing we heard was the sound of gunfire from out on the veranda. As we all rushed out by the pool, even in the low light of evening, we could distinguish our host (and *Suspect*'s product manager!) lying bleeding fatally on the deck. The paramedics were summoned, but too late.

And whodunit? Surely you don't expect me to ruin the surprise now, do you? □

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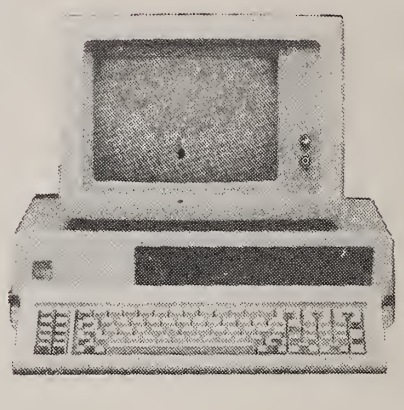

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COMMODORE BUSINESS MELODRAMA

Sometimes you buy a computer for one purpose and, as time passes, you need it to do something completely different. Contributor Ed Shurtleff found himself in this situation with his Commodore, and his experiences in choosing among the myriad of available programs may help readers in a similar predicament. Read on . . .

By Ed Shurtleff

When you go out to the local Toys R Us or discount house and see the rows and rows of brightly colored computer game packages in the Commodore section, do you wonder what else the 64 can do? You already know that it is a great hacker's computer and has low-priced modems available to make it into a very capable terminal, but do you speculate about how it would work as a word processor? Do you ever wonder why they call the company "Commodore *Business* Machines" when their computer sells for less than $200 in the toy stores and plugs into a color TV for output?

I hadn't thought much about business applications when I first got my Commodore 64. (I paid nearly $400 for it and thought I was getting a real bargain. I still think so, even though prices are lower now.) There was hardly any software available in stores or by mail order, and what there was mostly wasn't, if you follow me. I didn't particularly care, because I was engaged in some serious scientific number crunching at the time and all the programs had to be custom written anyhow.

But eventually there were all those neat columns of numbers on the screen, and later in print (after I got a printer), and finally it was time to write the reports. And the proposals. Then my wife started to edit and publish a newsletter. So I wrote her a quick and dirty printer-driver program to make an electronic typewriter out of the rig. This didn't even begin to exercise the capabilities of the printer, so I wrote some easy printer control routines. And then I needed...

What I needed was to get smart and stop the drudgery and find a good, full-featured word processor that would meet my needs by putting all the figures into a spreadsheet program, to save copying the formulas every time. If, that is, I could even remember where the data were filed, and how, and so on.

It was time, in short, to get a database, a spreadsheet, and a word processor that would suit me and the other family members who would be using them. We didn't want software that would be too smart, with features that are rarely needed but make learning and use complicated, but we also didn't want it so dumb that it could accomplish only part of its tasks.

Finding such software isn't an easy job. I read brochures and ads — nobody advertises the bad points about their products. I read "reviews" — these frequently were just new product announcements that repeated many of the same words as the ads. I talked to sales people — they couldn't *all* have been on commission, but my resistance to buying one perfect program (adapted, it's true, from software originally written for another machine, but *almost completely* debugged) for a lot more than I paid for the complete hardware system was exponentially high.

"Word of mouth" seemed a good way to go. The words that came out of the mouths of some of the early users cannot be repeated in a family-oriented publication like this one, but the information was good and it sure helped in rejecting a lot of marginal stuff and saved evaluation time and effort. User groups are a good source for this information. User groups are also good for borrowing material so you can do your own "hands-on" testing.

My primary product "want" was a word processor. I was busily going through my evaluation when *Computer's Gazette* magazine published an article, and a program listing, for a word processor for VIC-20 and the C64 called *Speedscript*. I read the specs in the article and found only a couple features missing from what I'd intended to buy. My wife and I shared the labor of typing in several pages of program listings. A proofreader program keeps you from making most mistakes. We tried it. Exactly as advertised! (I didn't happen to try the one area where there was a major bug, which has since been fixed.)

I'd recommend *Speedscript* for anyone who has the same word processing needs as I do, like articles, reports, individual letters, proposals, etc. If you want to change "Jim" to "Bob" all the way through your novel, with one keystroke, forget it! You can do this semi-automatically, using the HUNT command, probably faster than waiting for one of the programs that stores every page onto disk as it's finished to load and reload, but SEARCH AND REPLACE isn't available. If you want to send "personalized" form letters to a lengthy mail list, this program's not for you either. Most other things are there, however. You can even work with files from some other word processors. The program is well supported, with frequent editorial updates and reader comments in the magazine.

Speedscript was the cornerstone of my business utility library. I began to look around for a decent database and spreadsheet to complete the set.

I followed a slightly different process in looking for a database. The sheer size of the manuals for some of the full-featured software

was frightening. Did I really want all the things it seemed these programs could do? Did I want to put up with the complications? So I bought a low-priced package to use in the meantime and to discover the limitations of what I had and what other goodies I might eventually want.

Data Manager from Timeworks, my starter database, isn't a bad little program. As a matter of fact, it has a couple of features, such as data analysis capability, that many of the others don't have. It works well on cassette, too. But is has limitations and restrictions. Through using and exercising the system, I found out rapidly what these were in my own frame of reference, and also what "needs," "wants," and "would be nice's" seemed to fit my personal requirements. With all these in mind, it was easy to select *Delphi's Oracle*, from Batteries Included, as my database choice. Although this software is now called *The Consultant*, the differences, if any, are minor. There is also a family of special-purpose offshoots from *The Consultant* with input and output tailored for each subject.

I can't really say that I've selected a spreadsheet for the 64. Although *Calc Result* (especially the "Advanced" version with the multiple windows, even though it costs twice as much as the "Easy") rates high in many evaluations, I've never used it, and no basis for a recommendation. *Practicalc* works well, but then so does *Multiplan*, allowing for the differences in labeling the rows and columns. This doesn't make much difference to me. For some reason I've had only a few spreadsheet applications to do at home and I can't remember the instructions from one time to the next, so I need to go to the manual as a first-time user whenever I use either. I expect the next spreadsheet I use will be whatever one I first find the manual for!

Also, I tend to compare other spreadsheets to *Lotus 1-2-3*, which I use at work. This is an excellent program in every way. I only wish it were available on cartridge for my 64. Then there wouldn't be any question as to choice.

Obviously, my eventual choices of software were dependent on particular requirements of my own situation, and your requirements will be different. Nonetheless, the techniques I used in making my selections should also be applicable in helping you make the choice that's right for you.

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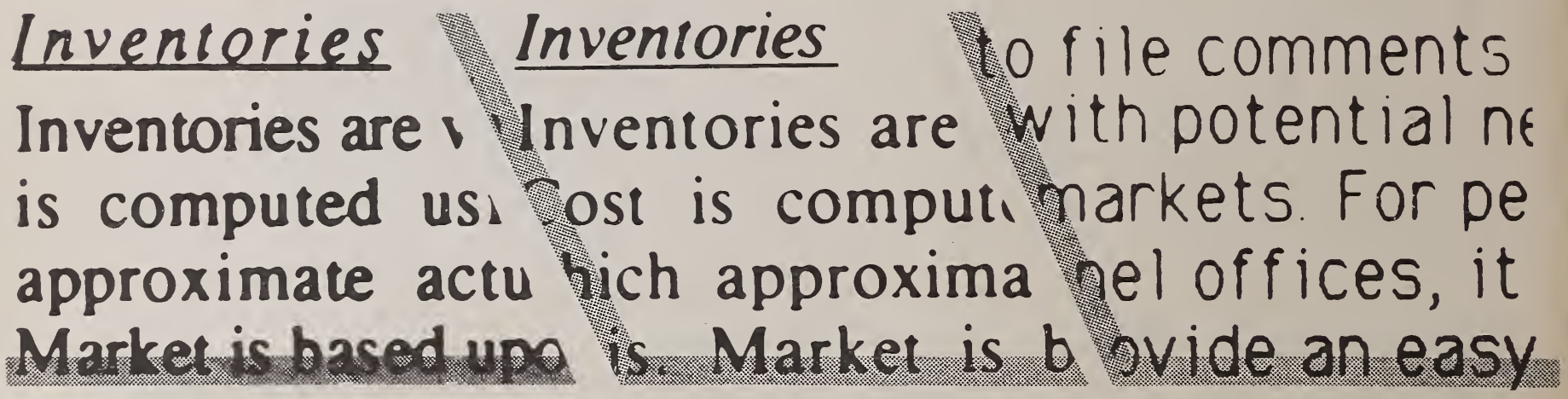
LASER PRINTERS

The latest in high quality, high speed printers for the microcomputer user

By Ken Goehner



Magnified examples of: Typesetting, Apple LaserWriter, Dot-Matrix printing.

Fast, quiet, crisp and clean, laser printers are beginning to make their mark in the realm of computer peripherals as one of the most versatile and useful business tools on the market. Small wonder. Laser printers combine some of the best qualities of dot matrix printers with the character clarity of a typesetting machine at a speed of six to fifteen times that of a typical daisy wheel printer, at a volume (55 db ±) that makes a disk drive sound loud.

The imaging is nothing short of astounding. The standard "near letter quality" dot matrix printer generates around 144 dots per inch. For most purposes this is acceptable, though nobody is likely to confuse the image quality with that produced by a simple typewriter or the Gutenberg press. It is not uncommon to find a situation, particularly in an engineering or accounting environment, where data are collected, correlated, and printed out, only to be retyped by hand as is *pro forma* in the world of three-piece suits and investment capital. Laser printers are well on their way to changing that forever.

Laser printers generate at least 300 dots per inch, and to the unaided eye the dot characters are virtually indistinguishable from typeset characters. There are some limitations to the laser's repertoire: depending on the manufacturer, a laser printer can only handle between one and sixteen different fonts at a time (including boldface, italics, underline, and varied point sizes and leadings), but as a practical matter this is of little consequence. Fonts can be changed by swapping plug-in cartridges or by entering fonts through software as required by the individual machine.

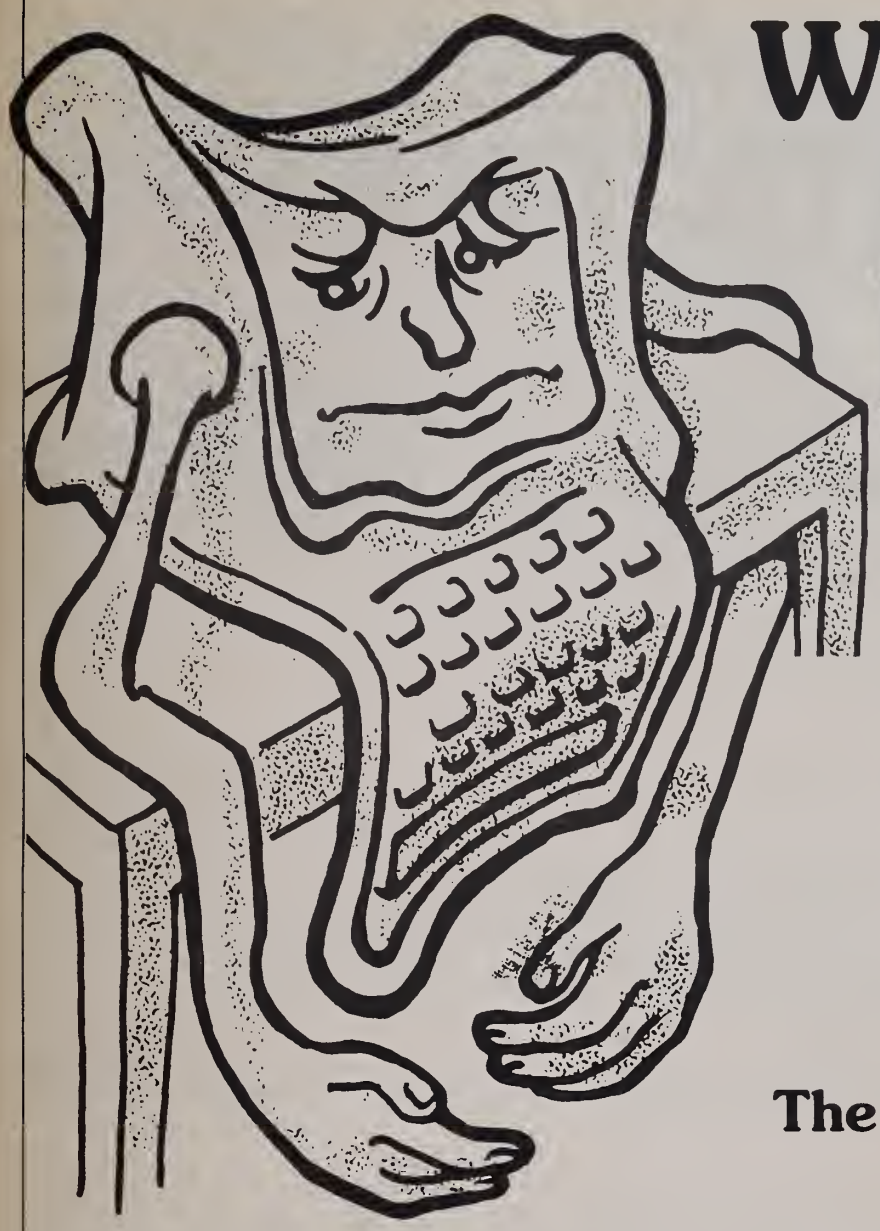
Laser printers also have a limited graphics capability, being restricted by the size of their graphics buss to basic lines, pie charts and histograms, but inside sources are hinting that the new crop of laser printers scheduled for release this year will be able to produce graphics that would make an engraver weep.

The technology that supports these fantastic machines is not all that new; internally there is a strong kinship between laser printers and photocopiers. Simply put, a laser printer works something like this. First a strong positive charge is applied to a drum inside the printer. As the drum rotates, the laser (an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation) flashes on and off as dictated by the information stored in the printer's buffer memory. Whenever the beam strikes the drum, it reverses the charge on that particular portion of the drum and the dot pattern of a character is formed. Next the drum is exposed to a powder similar to photocopier toner which clings to the negatively charged portions of the drum. The powder is then transferred to the paper, which is then heated to bond the powder to the paper. The entire process takes just under six seconds, and the result is as good as, if not better than, the finished product from an offset printer. Laser printers are designed to accommodate standard paper sizes (8½" x 11", 8½" x 14") as well as smaller off sizes and envelopes, and most can print either vertically or horizontally.

Laser printers are not for everyone. For one thing, they are expensive; prices start at about $2500 and start climbing towards the $10,000 mark pretty quickly (this is not including the all-important service contract). The price is not likely to come down much in the foreseeable future either. The technology behind these printers (primarily the optical guts of the beast, in most cases a device called a Canon laser printer engine) is expensive, and will remain so until an inexpensive method of manufacturing lasers is found. At this time it is well within the realm of possibility to spend twice as much on a printer as you did on your micro. Second, the current crop of printers will not support Computer Assisted Design programs and will not accept paper larger than 8½" x 14".

With the exception of Apple's LaserWriter, the current crop of laser printers support only IBM and compatible systems. The LaserWriter, designed to function as part of a Macintosh office environment, can make full use of the sophisticated graphics capabilities of the Macintosh but can also be made to function in conjunction with IBM-based systems.

The primary market for laser printers is therefore businesses that deal heavily in information; they are a godsend to law offices, insurance companies, accounting firms, charitable fund raising organizations, and public relations outfits that specialize in those "you may already have won..." mail merged personalized form letters. Other potential users may include people who wish to put out newsletters and the like. Pagination programs will soon be available that will support the full range of laser printers and make them a comparatively inexpensive alternative to typesetting equipment, especially if the printer is used on a time sharing basis. □



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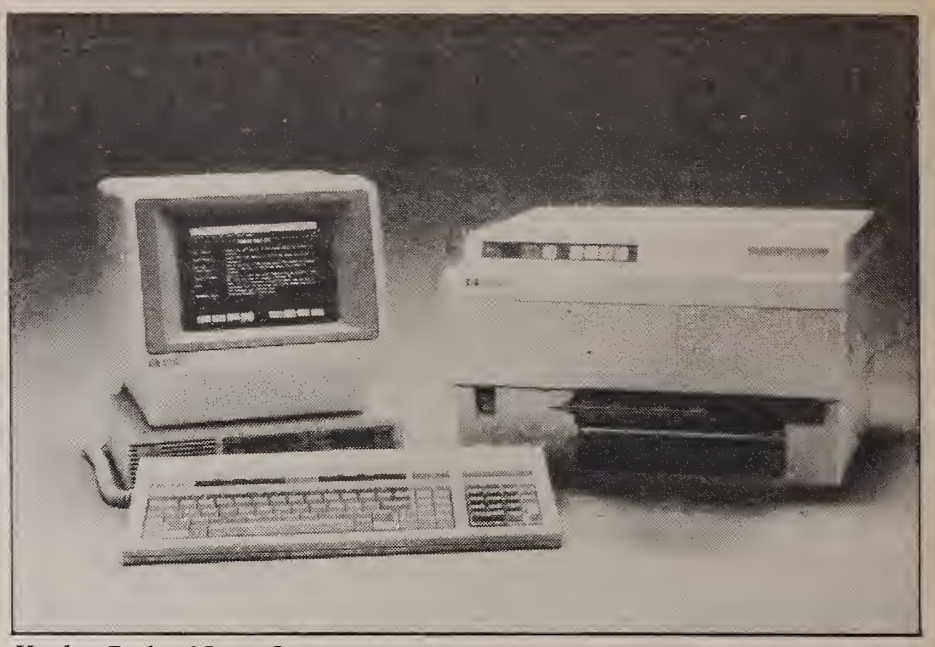
The Hewlett-Packard Laser Jet

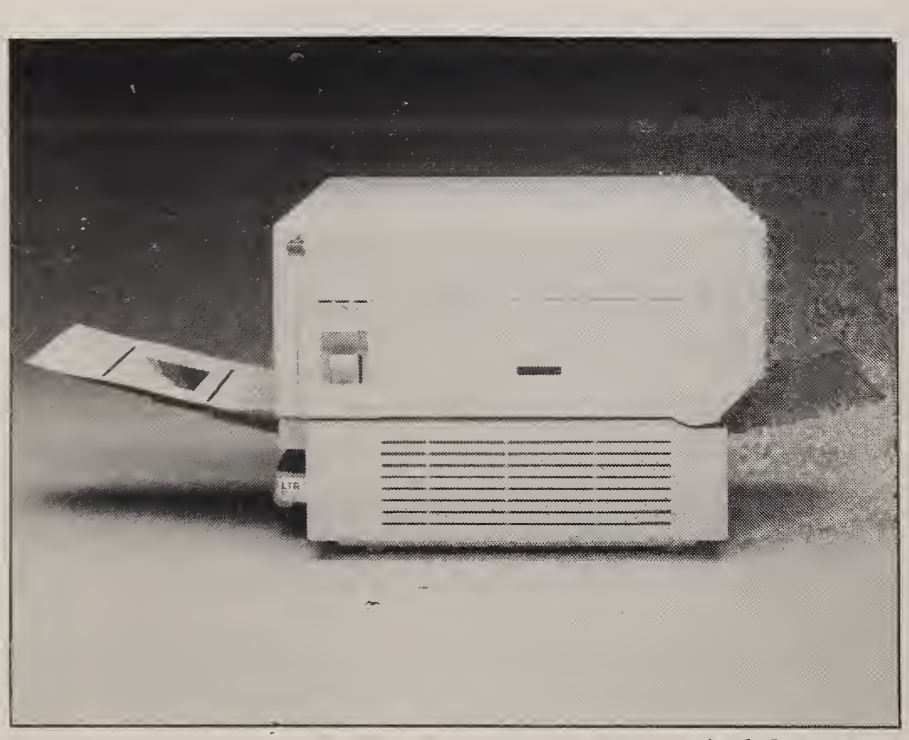
Probably the most available laser printer on the market. List $3,495, with considerable price variance depending on the dealer. The HP has one on-board font, with other fonts optional through plug-in cartridges. The Laser Jet prints at 325 characters per second, and can print either normally (top to bottom) or lengthwise (in the realm of laser printerdom this is called a "Landscape" option). The HP works with HP computers, PC's and compatibles only.



Hewlett-Packard Laser Jet

Konica's LP 3010

Scheduled for release around June of this year, the LP 3010 is expected to list for around $2600. Unlike most laser printers, this machine does not work around the Canon Engine, and Konica's proprietary technology has made this printer faster, quieter, less expensive, and less expensive to operate, than its competition, while offering two fonts per cartridge, a more compact size, and a lighter weight.



Apple LaserWriter

Apple LaserWriter

Due for release in March 1985, the LaserWriter is expected to sell for $6995. Because of its compatibility with the Macintosh, it can fully utilize programs like *MacDraw* and *MacPaint* to achieve extremely sharp and varied graphics. In addition to supporting all Macintosh fonts, it prints standard typefaces like Times™ and Helvetica™, in a range of sizes starting at 4pt and limited only by the size of the paper. It uses standard sizes of business paper — 8½ x 11 and 8½ x 14 A4 and B5 — and also supports envelopes and labels via manual feed. It also prints on overhead transparency material. The print quality is 300 dots per inch; the printer works at a maximum speed of 8 pages per minute.

The Personal Computer Products Inc.'s Daisy Laser 1000

Released in November, '84, this printer lists for $3495 to $3785 depending on the number of fonts and the size of the buffer memory you require. The Daisy Laser will print 16 different fonts per page and features three ROM cartridge slots for different font cartridges as well as the ability to download fonts from software. The Daisy Laser can emulate the Diablo 630 letter-quality printer and functions well with all the software that will drive the Diablo. In addition, the Daisy Laser offers a unique form generation function, allowing users to design their own office forms using any standard office word-processor. Thereafter, information and data can be printed simultaneously with the custom form, eliminating any operator paper handling of preprinted forms.

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AND YOU THOUGHT IT JUST DREW PRETTY PICTURES

Macintosh: One Year Later

by Mary Eisenhart

Introduced last year with an Orwellian TV commercial and promoted with a state-of-the-art ad campaign, Apple's Macintosh is probably the closest thing to a household word in the computer industry. Significant numbers of American consumers have taken the Mac to heart for reasons ranging from its unprecedented user-friendliness to its entrancing hi-res graphics program *MacPaint*.

At the same time, the Mac has had its critics and doomsayers. At the time of its introduction, it was incompatible with existing software; while Apple promised that a wide variety of programs were being designed, retailers grumbled that they were slow in arriving and not entirely bug-free either. Another drawback was that the Mac had rather limited memory (128K), which was all the more unfortunate since most of its software, including the scintillating *MacPaint*, was quite memory-hungry. All in all, business and professional users intended not to take the Mac very seriously, and epithets like "Yuppie toy" were frequently bandied about.

All that may be changing. Late last year, Apple introduced an enhanced — though expensive — 512K Macintosh, and in the meantime a profusion of software was being designed by Apple and outside developers for every conceivable application. And so far, 1985 seems to be the year that Apple aggressively tries to convince business that Macintosh is the wave of the future. Yet another bizarre Super Bowl commercial (this one featuring blindfolded executives plummeting lemming-like over a cliff) became an instant national conversation piece — and incidentally warned would-be office system buyers of the dangers of assuming that IBM was the only way to go.

Finally, on January 23 at its annual shareholders' meeting, Apple unleashed the multiple whammy — The Macintosh Office, a system that might really be revolutionary enough to justify the company's habit of endowing chairman Steve Jobs with the title of "product visionary."

Perhaps the most spectacular element of the Mac office system is Apple's new LaserWriter printer, which takes full advantage of the Mac's hi-res graphics capabilities and uses 300-dots-per-inch printing to produce results virtually indistinguishable from typesetting. A business group of up to 31 people can generate documents on the LaserWriter from their Mac workstations; the printer can handle not only the commonly-used sizes of letterhead and business forms but also envelopes, labels and overhead transparency material. According to Barbara Koalkin, marketing manager for Macintosh Office products, "The LaserWriter not only replaces daisy-wheel and dot-matrix printers, but in many instances it obviates the need to go to an art department or print shop for typesetting and pasteup" because it makes full use of graphics programs like *MacDraw* and *MacPaint*.

There's more — Apple also unveiled the AppleTalk Personal Network. While one of the biggest stumbling blocks to companies wishing to set up an office network of personal computers and peripherals has always been horrendous expense, AppleTalk connects up to 32 devices (including, if desired, file servers and the LaserWriter) at a suggested price of $50 per connection.

Integrated into the Macintosh office system is the Lisa 2/10, renamed the Macintosh XL to emphasize that there is a "Super Mac" for users who require a large screen, 512K memory expandable to 1024K, and a built-in hard disk capable of storing up to 10 megabytes. Meanwhile, both Apple and third-party developers continue to expand the line of software available for the Macintosh system — Lotus's integrated business software package *Jazz* (similar to its creation *Lotus 1-2-3*) is expected to dispel the last vestiges of doubt about the Mac's business capabilities.

And, in a move both revolutionary and shrewd, Apple declared a truce in Compatibility Wars. "We realize," wrote Jobs and CEO/President John Sculley in their press statement, "we must connect the Macintosh Office with the IBM world." MacTerminal and the Apple Cluster Controller now allow either single users or networks to communicate with IBM mainframes; further, Apple plans to introduce an AppleTalk card that connects the IBM PC with the Macintosh Office, plus software allowing the PC to print on the LaserWriter and use the Apple hard-disk file server. The company is also working on additional software to integrate the PC more closely into The Macintosh Office.

The new products are due to arrive in the stores in March. Time and experience will tell whether the Macintosh Office is indeed the answer to business's prayers.

And meanwhile, the Mac's first year of experience has put it into the hands of some innovative souls who put it to uses you might not have thought of. Their stories follow.

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4. THE SD-15 HAS A NEAR-LETTER QUALITY MODE. THE FX-100 DOESN'T.
5. THE SD-15 DOES THE IBM 12X6 GRAPHICS. THE FX-100 DOES NOT.
6. THE SD-15 DOES N/144 LINE SPACING. THE FX-100 DOES NOT.
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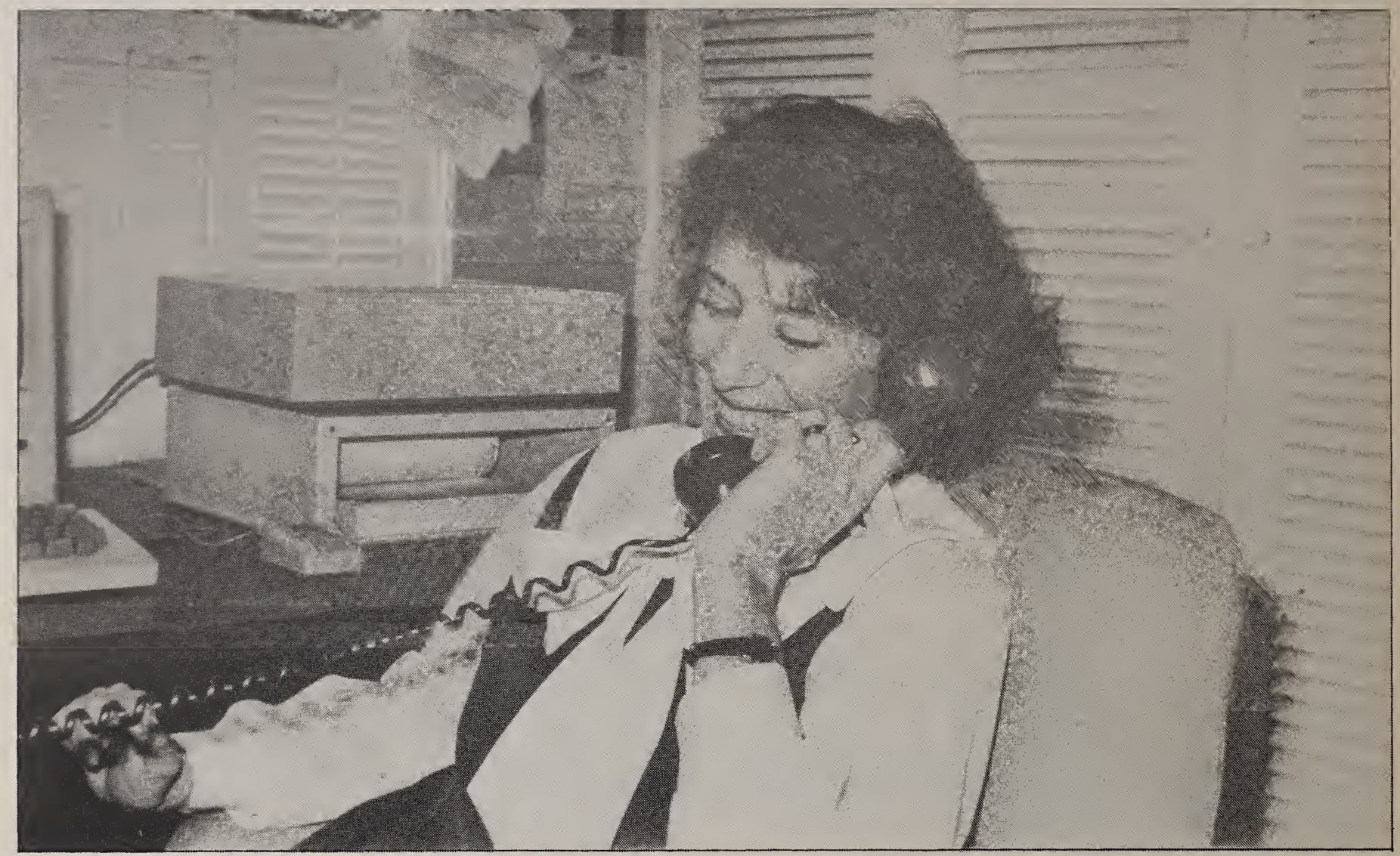
Mac Comes to the Office



Barbara Leone. Photo: Mary Eisenhart

Since September of last year when she founded MicroSource Consulting Services, Barbara Leone of Orinda has been going into the offices of business clients large and small, solving problems, installing software and training employees in the use of equipment. She also advises her customers on resolving computer-related difficulties over the phone. And while roughly half of her clients use IBM-based systems, the other half use Macintoshes; Barbara herself admits to being a "Macintosh fanatic."

Why, one might reasonably ask, does she need to spend 5-7 days a week in this sort of activity, when the Macintosh is famous for its ease of operation? "The Macintosh is the most ideal of all situations for any consultant," she says, "because it's the most easy-to-use piece of equipment you can get. But still, I'm finding in the big organizations that not everybody's as intuitive as Apple would like to have thought they'd be, and they still need training. So I take them through the Macintosh in depth, the concept, the interface, why it works that way, what Apple intended for you to be thinking. I take them through step-by-step in thought problems and participation exercises on using the equipment; we do things together, then they do things on their own. It's been very effective."

Evidently. Her regular clients include the likes of AT&T, whose ongoing reorganizations require increasing numbers of employees, many virtually computer-illiterate, to become familiar with at least some computer operations. And while much of Barbara's success is due to extensive knowledge (she's been working with microcomputers as a system analyst and programmer since Apple put out its first machine, and worked for two years in the company's sales training division, familiarizing business customers with their new computers), she attributes much of it to a more subtle factor: "People get enthusiastic about the computer because I am. They see that I can do it, and I seem like just a regular person, just anybody off the streets, and I think it gives people confidence."

The most recurring problems she faces are computer fear and the reluctance of clients to spend long hours poring over instruction manuals. In both cases, she says, the Macintosh is the ideal machine to work with, its basic nature being part of the solution. Employees are less afraid of it because of Apple's user-friendliness ad campaign, and the documentation of procedures, indexes, etc. is much simpler than the IBM equivalent. "The learning curve here is so much less than the learning curve with the IBM. You can sit down and be productive with a Macintosh inside of an hour."

Those reasons aside, she finds that there are almost as many reasons given byher clients for putting Macs in their offices as there are clients themselves. Some need high quality graphic output; some like the sharp-easy-to-read screen; some like it for spreadsheets and forecasting; some just like the fact that employees can take the machine home to do extra work. "The only thing the Macintosh is lacking, business-wise, is certain vertical-market packages, and a really sophisticated accounting package that can be used by someone other than the small businessman."

Barbara anticipates that with the advent of *Jazz*, the AppleTalk network and other elements of The Macintosh Office, the business community will take to the Mac as an office machine in ever-increasing numbers. She observes that the Mac works well either alone or as part of an existing IBM system — "It can be a good computer to have in a large organization along with IBMs, because of the fact that you have such a variety of computer literacy in the large companies. Having Macintoshes in the office with IBMs can be very helpful for those people who don't have the time or the inclination to work with the conventional type computer like IBM." And, she says, computers are much more likely to justify their existence in the office if employees actually *use* them. (Barbara Leone, MicroSource Consulting Services, (415) 254-4999.)

Mac's Adventure in the Public Domain

As Shep Tamler of the East Bay Macintosh User Group shows off its collection of public domain software, drawings, games, spreadsheets, filing systems and calendars appear in rapid succession. Oblivious of all this, a ceaseless parade of stick-figure insects marches implacably across the screen.

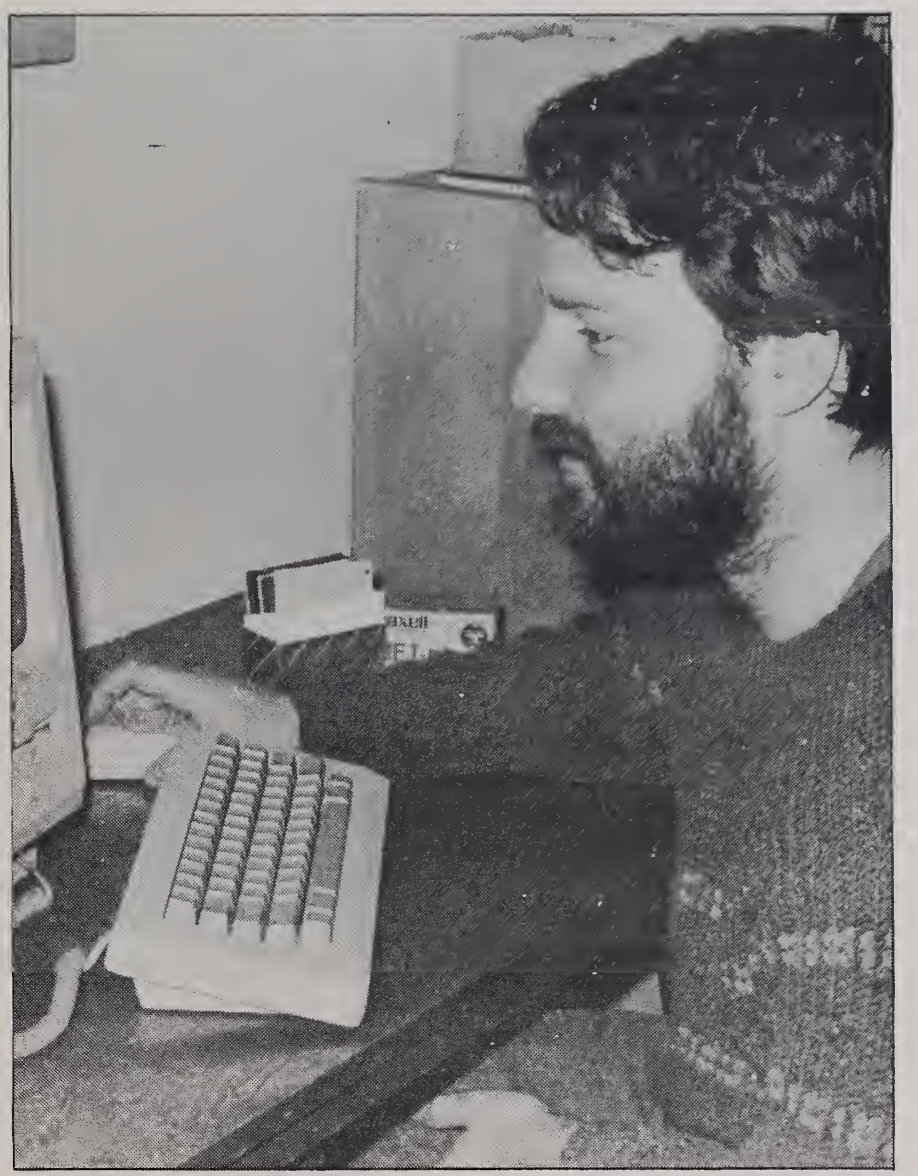
More work for the exterminator? Not exactly. The insects are generated by a public-domain program called *System Bugs*, which, if the user so desires, can make the crawly critters scuttle across whatever else is happening on-screen.

The public domain software world is one of inventiveness, adventure, community spirit and more than a little insanity. Perhaps in keeping with its just-folks image ("Make sure you put in your article that Mac people are *not* alien beings," admonishes Shep), the Mac seems to have generated a broad spectrum of free software with applications ranging from the ultra-practical to the utterly useless. Generally available from user groups like EBMUG, public domain software offers a useful alternative to spending big bucks. It also seems to serve as a creative outlet for hundreds of dedicated souls who spend 12-hour days slaving over a hot computer and then come home to play with Mac.

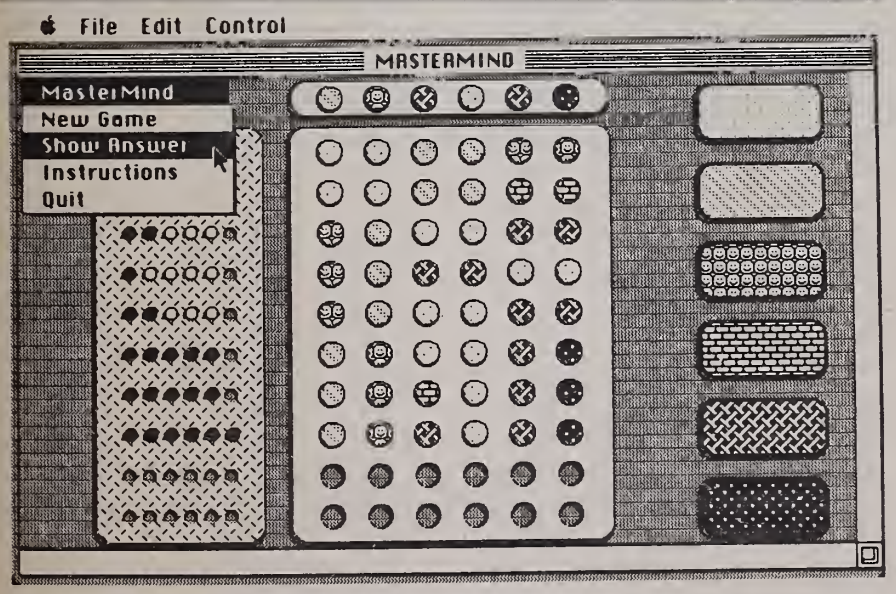
The software comes from several sources. Some is devised by individual group members. Other programs come from national networks like CompuServe, which feature Special Interest Group listings of newly-available offerings; still others come from the constant practice of disk-swapping among user groups nationwide. There's an ongoing process of revision and updating — a newly-acquired program may be only a few days old, or may have been successively refined in Cupertino, Peoria and Idaho Falls.

Among the gems in the EBMUG library, aside from *System Bugs*:

PepsiCaps: This is one of those programs that you might think serves no useful purpose, since all it does is cause bottlecaps inscribed "Pepsi-Cola" to dance across the screen. Little do you know that this is not only a piece of high-level corporate strategy but a bit of history that significantly predates the release of the Mac itself. As Shep tells it, "John Sculley, the president of Apple, used to work at Pepsi. When they were courting him to get him to work at Apple, they made this thing Pepsi caps."



Shep Tamler. Photo: Mary Eisenhart



Shep Tamler's version of Mastermind *for the Mac*

Iago by Mindscape: a public-domain version of the board game *Othello*, this game includes a useful function called "Hide, the boss is coming," which, when clicked, changes the game display to a *Multiplan* spreadsheet.

Rolodex: "This was written by the guy who wrote *MacPaint*, Bill Atkinson," says Shep. "He's a good guy, he gave it away for free." No kidding. This is an address-filing system (useful for directories, mailing labels, etc.) whose speed and ease of operation put some expensive business software to shame.

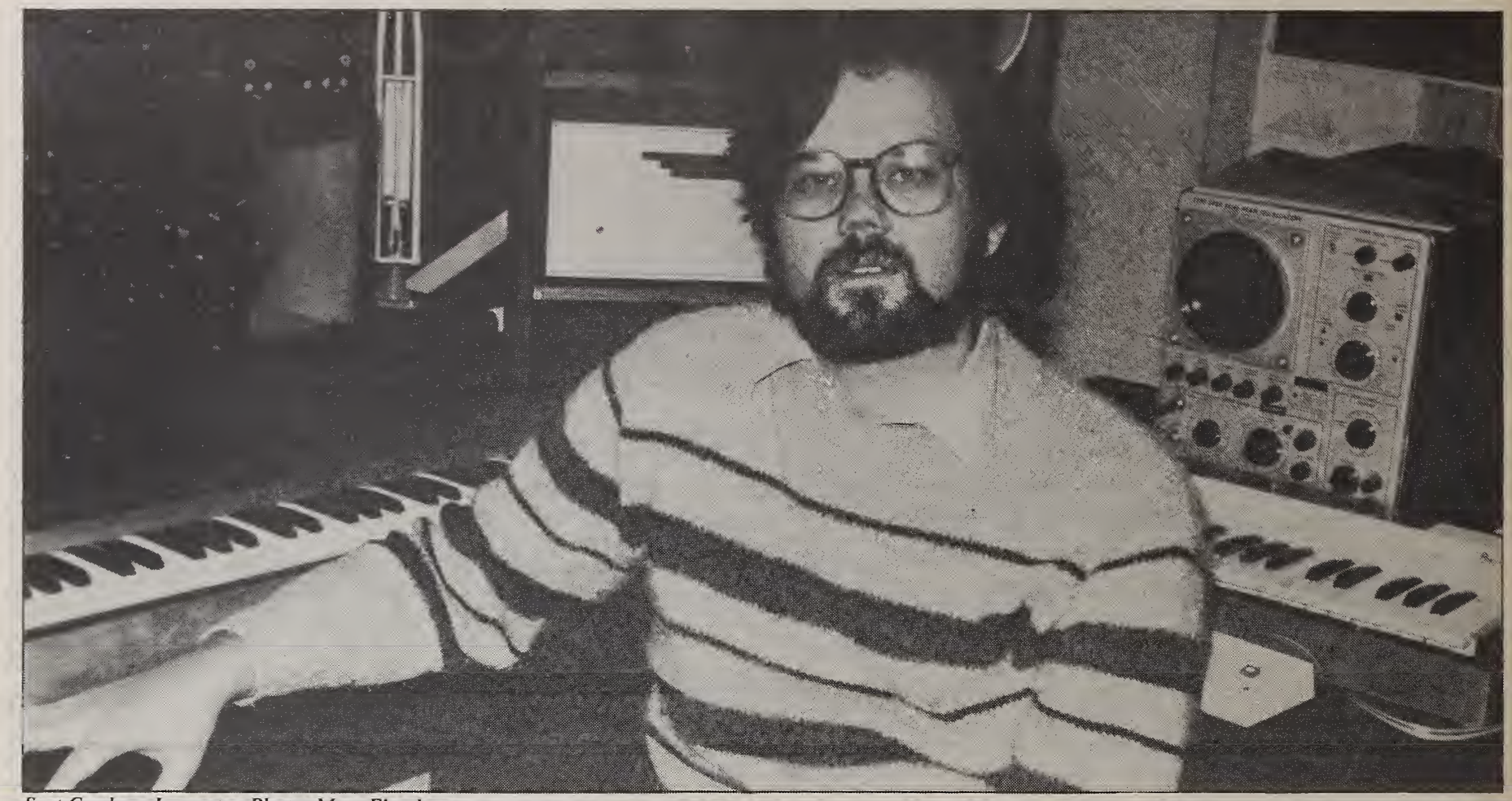
MacBackup: "Legally," says Shep, "you're allowed to make a backup copy" of copy-protected software. This program will let you do it, and is especially useful if you want to copy information onto hard disk.

512K: plans for upgrading your 128K machine. How complicated is it? "Too complicated for me," says Shep. "It's hard, even if you *can* do it, to do it exactly right."

Mastermind: (see illustration) Shep himself devised this version of the color-matching board game. Patterns are substituted for colored pegs, and, as the example shows, you can peek at the answer if you're stumped.

If these items sound like something your Mac can't do without, give Shep and EBMUG a call at (415) 653-5849. Also, Shep and his cohorts are always on the lookout for new software, so if you've written something, made a good *MacPaint* drawing, or have some other accomplishment you'd like to show off, give him a call.

Mac on the Musical Frontier



Scot Gresham-Lancaster. Photo: Mary Eisenhart

By day, Scot Gresham-Lancaster is the Technical Director of the Center for Contemporary Music at Oakland's Mills College. His job puts him in a veritable hotbed of revolutionary ideas in music, ideas which often entail ever-more-sophisticated manipulation of sound by computer.

The rest of the time, Scot (who, along with his friend Daryl Johansen, forms a team known as Studio Software) is hard at work devising a musical program which will, among other things, allow the user to control several synthesizers at once. He spends long hours manipulating sound waves, perfecting techniques of timbre transformation, and engaging in other pursuits designed to be perennially opaque to the layman. His computer? The 128K Macintosh.

While the average Mac user, if he considers the musical applications of the machine at all, is unlikely to want it to do anything more esoteric than play Beethoven's *Fifth* on kazoo or "Mary Had A Little Lamb" on harpsichord, Scot sees no particular reason to limit a software package to such uses. "I wouldn't want to have it boxed in," he says, "so that someone with original ideas couldn't investigate those ideas."

Original ideas rank high among his values. Some four years ago he was working for Oberheim (a leading manufacturer of synthesizers) and was told he would never advance in the company because he was too obsessed with pie-in-the-sky notions. Pugnaciously, he still insists on the importance of wild possibilities: "Getting focused on a whacked-out idea shows you the path of the future. And you say, well, to get there, I've got to do this. You do have to stick to your goal."

The Macintosh, he says, is a great tool for musical exploration. It allows the user to program sixteen different sounds and play any four of them simultaneously — the Mac's sound driver being a big improvement over the tinny Apple II version. He adds that designers are currently working night and day on a MIDI interface that would link the Mac with most types of synthesizers. When that product becomes available, he says, the possibilities are considerably enhanced: "You could develop stuff that you could listen to on your Macintosh when you didn't have your DX-7 [synthesizer] around, that'd give you a general idea of what you're doing in four voices, but when you plugged in the MIDI controller you could hear it in full."

For a number of reasons, Scot maintains, the Macintosh is an ideal composer's computer. Its powerful 68000 chip allows great freedom in composing, with high levels of speed and resolution (the Apple II, by comparison, runs four times slower and has half the work size).

The Mac's user interface, he adds, allows programmers to design software that's virtually self-documenting, which can, according to need, feature desktop environments, scrolling, buttons, dials, or other visual analogs to actual synthesizer hardware. "Once you learn *MacPaint* or *MacWrite*, and you learn the tricks of how to go up and down the page, how to close, how to get around the desktop, then you've essentially learned all the things you need to know to run *any* Macintosh application program," he points out. In other words, instead of spending long hours struggling with a manual, the would-be composer can create an on-screen mockup of the synth he's dealing with and manipulate it directly. "And that," he laughs, "is the same computer that can do your taxes."

Another attractive point is the Mac's ability to interface with larger computers, enhancing the range of available sound. "It has two serial ports," says Scot, "and one of the projects I have right now is getting it to talk to a VAX environment — a large mainframe. There just happens to be one at Mills."

The particular package he and his partner are developing is fairly sophisticated, and its ultimate form will probably depend on the company that eventually markets it. However, it will undoubtedly combine specialized features with mass-market functions, all within a Mac-oriented environment. "We're building a black box that you throw numbers at and sounds come out predictably. You say, 'I want this frequency with this wave shape changing to this wave shape...' We're designing something we can use for our more whacked-out ideas, but that they can use just as easily for more traditional stuff. It acts just like a resource file, which is part of the user environment."

He continues, "I'm investigating ideas that computers make possible. There are things that you can do with a Macintosh that you used to have to have a huge IBM mainframe to do, and now I can just sit down with my Macintosh and try out my ideas." (Scot Gresham-Lancaster, Center for Contemporary Music (415) 430-2191)

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DUEL OR DIE:

The Big Mac vs The Big Banana Diet

As she ventured into the world of computerized nutrition, our heroine figured it would be a classic case of Beauty and the Beast. Little did she realize that it was really the Hare and the Tortoise . . .

Jina Bacarr.
Photo: Don Hamilton

By Jina Bacarr

10:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning. I jumped out of bed with the lightness of a perfect soufflé and pinched myself with confidence: not an ounce of extra flesh on my well-exercised body, I noted. Well then, *I* had nothing to fear as I prepared for this morning's duel of the diets using the latest technology in nutrition called "Computrition." Unlike my stalwart challenger whose favorite snack was a Big Mac "down easy," I carefully counted every broccoli blossom as if it were a cluster of emeralds around my neck.

I giggled my way through my morning routine of numerous vitamins, orange juice and a golden ripe banana, wondering what John (my noble co-writer and combatant) was devouring for breakfast. Probably buttery scrambled eggs and crisp chewy bacon, I figured, with lightly seasoned hash browns and homemade buttermilk biscuits spread with farm fresh butter. As I downed my third cup of black coffee, I wondered why my slightly bruised banana suddenly tasted like a soggy cotton ball. I dumped the slimy peel into the trash and tried to ignore the smell of rising yeast biscuits that filled my head like sugar plum fairies on a marathon. What insanity was this? I asked myself, looking into the oven just to make sure the nostalgic smell of baking bread *was* only in my head. (I hadn't had a homemade biscuit since my last trip over the river and through the woods to Grandma's house). The oven was empty. Like my stomach, I thought. But I ignored its rumblings. I was used to the "breakin' and poppin' " that went on every morning after my morning ritual of alphabet vitamins, juice and coffee. All for the sake of good health and nutrition, right? (*And* a size eight dress.)

Without another sinful thought about real food, I headed for the field of honor: the Naturway Store in South Coast Plaza Village in Costa Mesa. I was confident about my victory using my "healthy" diet over the admitted junk food regime followed by my co-writer (even if I was still hungry). In fact, I was so confident I had shunned the use of a "second" when our diets would be put through the Computerized Nutritional Analysis.

I met my challenger on neutral ground outside the store while dreaming of a grandiose luncheon on the grass later (I know at least fifty-seven ways to prepare alfalfa sprouts and carrot tops). We discussed the terms of the duel, agreeing not to draw blood (a blood test was not required—I convinced John we were only getting our diets analyzed, *not* getting married) and to abide by the terms of the outcome. (Would John ever be able to indulge in a Double Bacon Cheeseburger Supreme again?) I also filled him in on what I knew about this unique approach to nutrition using the latest in computer technology.

According to Tom Britt, General Manager of the Naturway Stores, the Nutricenter Computer was originally used in hospitals and dietary clinics. Now the Computerized Nutritional Analysis is being offered for the first time in a retail store. As of this writing, there are two Nutricenters, one in the Costa Mesa store, the other in the Lakewood store. Mr. Britt advised me that the Nutricenter John and I would be using was a prototype soon to be offered to the entire nutrition industry. The computer would analyze twenty important nutrients, count calories, check on fiber, calculate the amount of vitamin C, calcium, iron, even zinc. In fact, the computer would even tell you how many calories you could eat to lose weight, based on your exercise level (work out more, eat less).

John began to sweat when I said "exercise." He barely has time to breathe in his busy schedule, while I engage in approximately forty minutes of aerobics daily (I was involved in the writing and performing of a fitness tape recently and practice what I write). Oh, was I ever confident as we entered the Naturway store, as I contemplated the thrill of victory.

Had I known what awaited me, I would have given some thought to the agony of defeat . . .

George Hunter, the Manager of the Costa Mesa Naturway, greeted us warmly and explained what was involved in our nutritional analyses. While he talked, I ogled. Could this handsome chemist actually care what I ate for breakfast? (John nudged me, reminding me this was supposed to be work.) Back to the business at hand, I decided, as George gave us the questionnaires regarding our eating habits and lifestyles. "Do you snack?" "Are you under stress?" "Do you exercise?" were some of the questions asked, as well as the complete menus for our meals from the previous day. As we filled them out, I couldn't resist taking a peak at John's list — "teriyaki chicken, Boston clam chowder, cheese spread . . ." he had written. Really, John! With a slight sneer, I wrote down my banana, apple, fresh salad and small amount of turkey. When I was sure John wasn't looking, I added the six cups of black coffee I had also consumed. Well, this *was* between the computer and me. John would never have to know that exotic blends of imported coffee are my favorite pastime.

George took our questionnaires and fed them into the computer, taking note of our individual statistics. He entered each item of food separately, noting the amount, brand (if any) and how it was cooked. I discovered that the present system has somewhere around 30,000 entries, ranging from brownies with creamy icing to octopus (squid to you gourmands out there). There are at least a hundred different varieties of crackers, as well as such specific items as a Cheese Dog Brazier *à la* Dairy Queen.

I thought the computer was having a circuit board attack as it sputtered and spooled its way through John's menu of oatmeal, chowder, cheese spread and only-his-stomach-knows-for-sure what else. As it wound its way through numerous chicken dishes (I discovered John was a thigh man) I waved my sparse menu of broccoli and carrots in the computer's view screen. "Just wait," I announced proudly, "this next one will be as smooth as spreading cream cheese on a bagel!"

John gave me a dirty look. He was already breathing hard as the computer began his printout. My comment had whetted his appetite even more. "Thank God," he said, gritting his teeth and wiping his brow, "it's almost lunchtime."

"Perhaps you'd better change your menu." George handed him the results of his printout. "Read this." John took a look at the information reluctantly, mumbling about how his days were numbered in single digits. Next, while my diet analysis was bring printed out, I watched John's troubled eyes change from bleary red to sparkling blue. His eyebrows arched up in surprise and his mouth actually wrinkled up in the corners in a smile. His furry chin dropped a little, but he continued smiling. "I'm going to live," he said simply. "How could that be possible?" I asked. Here was a man who thought the world was one big peach pie with whipped cream — a man who spread processed cheese as abundantly as Santa Claus spread good cheer. I couldn't believe his diet analysis was actually positive. George quickly explained what the printout meant before John floated away to junk food heaven.

"Your caloric intake [under 2000 calories] isn't bad," he said, "but you'll have to lower it if you want to lose weight." John wrinkled his nose. That meant cutting down on his double portions of chicken and rice, but what the heck, one thigh was better than no thigh at all. George also explained that his breakfast of oatmeal and tea was actually very nutritious. Cut out the brown sugar on the cereal, he told him, and John would be on his way to a healthy, weight loss diet. Cut out the teriyaki sauce and creamy fish chowder, and he would lower his sodium and fat levels to the recognized RDA safe levels. In total, if he exercised more, lost a little weight and lowered his stress level, John would actually be very healthy .

The twenty-odd vitamins in my stomach had a sugar coating attack. I couldn't believe what I had just heard! I was even less prepared for the results of *my* diet analysis. According to the Computrition printout, I had consumed 782 calories (anything less than 1200 calories a day is considered starvation) of what I considered a balanced diet. However, I was lacking in iron, calcium, vitamin B12, folacin, zinc and carbohydrates (the main source of energy for the body). Combined with my high stress level and numerous cups of coffee, it was a wonder I could still focus my eyes on the printout (the only thing that saved me was the whole carrot I ate for dinner).

I put the printout down quickly and eagerly accepted the bran bar George handed me to save my starving body. As I munched on the nutritious snack, I caught the devious snicker of my co-writer. John looked mighty proud of himself as he noted my obvious state of semi-starvation (just minutes ago I had been so proud of my 34-inch hips. Now I tried to cover them with the computer sheet.) I said nothing, but continued to munch. The truth was, I didn't have the strength to talk.

But I could still think. And think I did. I knew now we had both lost — and won — the computer nutrition duel. While John's diet had been too high in cholesterol and sodium, he was actually eating a good variety of nutritious foods. My diet, although composed of nutritious foods, didn't have *enough* of the necessary nutrients to sustain life. I was sorely lacking in certain vitamins and energy carbohydrates. Also, by consuming caffeine at a high level and not eating enough food, I was actually cancelling out my daily vitamin intake. In fact, should I continue to lower my caloric intake, my body would eventually start shutting down its various processes (the reproductive is the first to go, while instinctive functions are usually the last). However, I *was* doing one thing right: vigorous daily exercise was an important part of reducing stress and keeping the body's internal machine in good running order (fighting off colds and flu, for example). I also found out that a recent study showed that lovers rarely caught colds from each other, indicating that a good state of mind is also a plus for good health.

A change was in order — not a drastic increase of calories, I realized, but a sensible approach to better nutrition. Less coffee, more grains and protein, as well as more frequent meals would put me on the way to a better diet. John would cut down on calories as well as sodium and fats, eat more vegetables and exercise frequently. It was that simple!

Well, it was time for lunch. John and I looked at each other. Mealtime would never be the same for either one of us again. But it would never be a losing battle either. Both opponents had been wounded, but nutritional honor had been served. We thanked George for his guidance into our adventure with Computrition — and his advice. There would be at least two healthy MICROTIMES writers from now on.

As we left the Naturway store, a cool noontime breeze caught me by surprise. "Ah . . . choo!" I sneezed and then remembered George's sage advice about staying healthy. "Eat right, exercise," he had said, "and fall in love." Hmmm, I though, a nutritious lunch and a brisk walk around the village would take care of the first two. And I *did* have a date tonight with that new "hunk".

Next morning as I enjoyed my "new" breakfast of cereal, herb tea and fruit, I didn't sneeze. Not even once. ■

TRIUMPH

Of The Junk Food Junkie

By John D. Gresham

I should have known that I was in trouble from the very start. Those of you who are regular readers of this column know that my usual role is to provide some technical insight to the bubbly views of Ms. Bacarr. Therefore, when I was asked to help out on her latest effort, I naturally assumed that my job was to provide some sort of technical commentary. No such luck. Much to my indignation, my job, quite simply, was not to provide a technical view, but a "junk food" view of the Naturway Nutricenter Computer System.

I should point out that I am a rather large (6′ 2½″) bachelor who is about 25-30 pounds overweight. I tend to eat out a great deal when I travel on business and I just don't get as much exercise as I should. My excess weight is the result. By comparison, Ms. Bacarr is a slim, trim lady who eats fruits and vegetables like a bird and is a certified aerobics "junkie" (6 times a week!). My indignation turned to horror when I found that we were to have a nutritional "face off" via the nutritional analysis program of the Nutricenter Computer System.

Faced with certain defeat and embarrassment at this "rigged" contest, I joined Ms. Bacarr at the Naturway health food store in Costa Mesa where we met with Mr. George Hunt of Naturway. Mr. Hunt, a former Department of Defense chemist whose previous work involved the development of high altitude photographic films, took us through a well-stocked store filled with bins of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and all sorts of things that are "good" for you. In addition to the food store, Naturway stocks a large variety of food supplements as well as a wide selection of fitness and health literature.

Leading us to the vitamin section, he explained the system to us. The Naturway nutritional analysis program is a series of linked subroutines that develop their information from several common data bases. The most important of these is a listing of literally thousands of different types of food, as well as the ways that they are prepared. To analyze an individual's diet, a three day diet log is inputted into the computer. In addition, the customer fills out a questionnaire which lists various factors about his or her lifestyle. Such information might include such things as snacking habits, alcohol consumption, and menstrual patterns (which, as it happens, I don't have). Taking my diet log and lifestyle questionnaire, Mr. Hunt inputted the data while I waited grimly. Beside me, Ms. Bacarr smiled with confidence while I squirmed. I knew this was going to be terrible.

The machine quickly produced a four page printout detailing the nutritional makeup of my diet, a histogram detailing the nutritional information, listings of any deficiences and excesses in my diet, as well as suggestions for improvements. As Mr. Hunt explained the data, my face brightened with surprise. My daily calorie count was only around 1900, well under my recommended 2700 maximum. In addition, my fat and cholesterol levels were about right. The bad news was that my protein and sodium levels were high, and my levels of fiber and a number of vitamins were low. Even this was not so bad, though. Thanks to the item-by-item breakdown of each food item, I was able to find that over half of the sodium that I had consumed came from the clam chowder I had eaten for lunch and the teriyaki sauce that I had put on my chicken for dinner. By simply eliminating these two items from my diet, I could bring my sodium level back into line. In addition, since most of the food that I eat is fairly soft and processed, the simple addition of some high-fiber food to my diet would quickly solve that deficiency. With the computer printout before us, Mr. Hunt continued to analyze both my diet and my lifestyle. Since I take both vitamin and mineral supplements, my low levels in these categories

were of little concern. I should note, though, that he recommends that whenever possible, we should derive our nutrients through food, not supplements.

Flushed by my apparent dietary success, I continued to watch with fascination as Mr. Hunt ran another subroutine of the program which develops information for those people who wish to lose weight (and who doesn't!). This part of the program, which takes into account my physical build, weight, and lifestyle factors (I didn't know that I lived a "sedentary" life) quickly showed me that weight loss, based only on a reduction in caloric intake, would have me at a starvation level before it would really be effective. However, if I would simply add some regular and moderate exercise to a slightly reduced diet (about 75% of my current total), I could be a lean, mean, 205-210 pound "hunk" in only about 3 months of moderate dieting. Mr. Hunt explained to me in that simply not eating does not insure a uniform or point weight loss. On the contrary, a balance of diet and exercise is required.

Pleased in the knowledge that my nutritional loss to Ms. Bacarr would be a narrow one, I watched with interest as Mr. Hunt inputed her vital statistics (nutritional, of course!) into the computer. Imagine our surprise when the printout showed Ms. Bacarr to have some serious nutritional deficiencies. First, her caloric intake was extremely low. While this by itself is not so disturbing, the fact that the foods that she consumes consist primarily of salads and fruits, to say nothing of her habit of drinking many cups of coffee each day, leaves her body with very little to run on. The total lack of fats, proteins, carbohydrates, and calcium bearing foods in her diet leaves her in very poor nutritional shape. As if this wasn't enough, her eating habits, in particular her skipping of breakfast every morning, wipes out whatever good the many vitamin and mineral supplements she takes might do her. I was stunned. Ms. Bacarr had eaten nutritional defeat from the plate of victory. I had won, sort of. Actually, I had not lost as badly as I might have.

While Ms. Bacarr skulked off to buy some bran muffins and other assorted foods, I talked about the Nutricenter Computer System with Mr. Hunt. He pointed out to me that the system is not a stand-alone system that can do all the work by itself. On the contrary, it represents an extremely powerful tool that trained nutritional personnel, in concert with their own specialized knowledge of health and nutrition, can use to plan individualized diet and nutritional plans for serious individuals who want to improve their health. He also informed me that while only two of the systems are currently in existence, at their Lakewood and Costa Mesa stores, plans are being developed to provide a version of the system to all of the Naturway facilities in the area.

As we walked back to our cars, Ms. Bacarr, and I compared our results as she took frantic bites out of a bran muffin. While we both had room for improvement in our diets and lifestyles, the Naturway system had shown us both the weaknesses and strengths of what we eat and how we live. Perhaps the most important thing that we learned from the machine was that both of us could make just minor alterations in our lifestyles and eating habits and see significant results. If you feel that you could use some help in these areas of your life, consider calling Naturway for an appointment. You will find it fascinating.

By the way, which way to the nearest McDonald's? ■

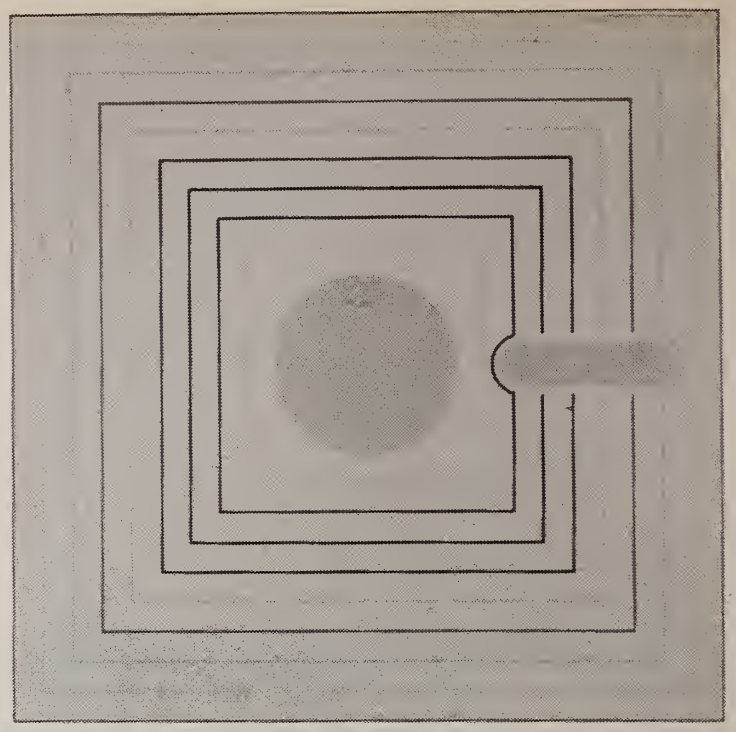
John Gresham.
Photo: Don Hamilton

REVIEWS

BUSINESS SOFTWARE

GET MAC-ORGANIZED.

A look at two data bases for the Macintosh.



MegaFiler™

As the first year of Macintosh's life draws to a close, many predictions have been realized. There actually is plenty of software now available for the Mac, and many of the programs are databases.

If you own a Mac and visit your favorite retail outlet to see what's new, you might be overwhelmed by all the choices of database management programs on the shelves. Instead of overwhelming you with all the facts about all the databases currently available, this article will show you two different types of databases, how they work and how they can work for you.

To start with, let's divide database programs into two fields. In one field are the simple file management systems that basically retain screens of information, while in the other are the more sophisticated, more powerful, full featured relational database management systems.

The first type are simple, can basically be used right out of the box, and are relatively inexpensive. The second field of programs are more complicated to learn and use, more powerful, can be expanded as needed and tend to be quite costly.

Let's look at the simple one first — keeping in mind that simple doesn't necessarily mean just simple to use, and that a complex database doesn't necessarily just mean more complicated to use.

Megafiler™ from Megahaus is the same program that runs on other computers, so you won't feel as shocked if you're familiar with it. But be warned, you old software gurus, the program is better on the Mac. Basically this is an easy-to-use filing system that lets you create the form on the screen to resemble a form that you can relate to, and then file it away.

With *Megafiler* you can call one form "P.O." for purchase orders. Then, using the mouse as a tool, you design the form to match yours, then enter the information into the computer on the form.

If you want to sort by P.O. number, no problem. Pull down the RECORD menu and select SORT, then select the field to sort on. A couple of seconds later, you have a list of all your data in the order that you specified. Simply amazing!

Remember that this is a single file, single view program, so when you search for a particular record, you'll have to thumb through all the records that match your criteria, with a click. However, you can get a listing sent to the printer, in the form of a label or table.

Again, the functionality of the mouse as a serious time saving tool stands out. In a matter of seconds, you can design and run off 200 labels. This is substantially less time than it takes with the same program on other computers.

Integration with other Megahaus programs, *Megamerge*™, *Megaform*™, and *Megadesk*™, makes this a well-rounded product that can grow to some extent.

A great feature is the ability to call up three forms at a time on the screen, although you can only update one at a time. Let's say you operate a small computer store. You would have an inventory, a list of clients, and file that would keep track of all the purchases made. Can you imagine booting up, loading in the customer file, searching for the client's account number, finding it, writing it down, closing that form, opening the one called inventory, subtracting the items that are purchased, closing that one, opening the invoice forms and entering all the information?

Not with *Megafiler*™. All you do is call up the three forms that you use the most at the beginning of the day, and, with a single click on the edge of that form/window, you switch from form to form just that quickly. You'll still have to do all the typing, but the operations of opening and closing a file are omitted, saving you over 50% of wasted time.

This is a great, simple, easy to use, and easy to understand database. If you're on a budget, it is reasonably priced too, but if your needs grow, you may soon find yourself needing something with a little more of a roar.

Enter *MacLion*™, from Computer Software Design. It's simply amazing what this program can do for you. First of all, *MacLion* has on line help. With a click of the mouse, you get instantaneous answers to your questions specifically about the area you are currently using. This is great, because, as I mentioned before, this is a more powerful, yet more complicated program to use. You really can't just take it out of the box and plug it right in without a little setting up of the system yourself.

This wonderful package is a fully operational, fully relational, and multi-relational database management system. This means that you can update many files at the same time, so when you enter a client's number, it can check the past history of purchases for this client, display the results, and while you're entering the current invoice, it can automatically deduct those items from your inventory.

A data dictionary allows you to define, edit, list, and delete all of your field, relation, and index definitions, without loss of data. The Mac worries for you so you don't need to.

MacLion also takes full advantage of the Mac's user interface. It has been designed for the Mac, not ported over and modified like some other databases we know. A full-screen generator allows you to create not only forms for inputting but also a form that can be used for displaying the information, or both on the same screen. Point and click, point and click . . . it's actually fun.

If you need a custom designed report or statement to send to your clients, or a balance sheet, it's no problem with the Report Writer, a report generator that works the same way as the screen generator.

Let's talk about how it all comes together. If you break an application down into sections, you end up with three: Data Entry, Data Manipulation, and Data Output. If you thought a serious application was a difficult, complex task that only systems analysts should undertake — Wrong, wrong, wrong! After all, who knows what your needs and wants are better than you? Meet LEO, *MacLion's* very own easy-to-use development language. Don't faint. There's more. It compiles.

MacLion comes with a 30-day money-back guarantee. No one does that — are these guys crazy or what? For $395.00, you can be king of the database jungle. Hats off to the guys and gals at C.S.D. for putting a program on the market that has functionality, personality, and, best of all, runs on the Macintosh.

— *Jim Teece*

BUSINESS SOFTWARE

FACTFINDER

Published by: Forethought Inc.

For: Macintosh

The Macintosh is a marvelous machine, designed for ease of use and intuitive operation. When it was first released, critics scoffed with cries of "Not IBM compatible!", "Too cute for business purposes!" and the ever popular "No supporting software!"

The software is here.

Introducing *Factfinder*, the first in a line of Macware by Forethought Incorporated. *Factfinder* is the electronic equivalent of having a cross-indexed file cabinet at your fingertips. It automatically dates all input information in the form of factsheets, then records the dates as the factsheets are amended. It accesses information by date, factsheet name, or key words designated when the information is entered or updated. Best of all, the entire system can be learned by even the most computerphobic in about an hour, and the documentation is so well referenced and lucid that any problems can be easily resolved by a quick run through the index.

Factfinder was designed to operate like a card catalog. Information, documents, addresses, whatever your input, is stored as a Factsheet. The Factsheet is filed in a Stack, which is a file you create to keep related information together — one Stack of memos, another of business contacts, a third of accounts receivable, etc. A Factsheet is limited in size only by the amount of memory, or RAM space, in your Macintosh, and a Stack is limited by the amount of disk space available. Text files from *Macwrite* and other ASCII specific word processors can be downloaded into Factsheets, and if the files prove to be too long, they can be loaded into successive Factsheets.

Stacks are easily created by icon manipulation. To create a Factsheet, all one has to do is select the appropriate Stack icon, and then select the new *Factsheet* option from the menu bar. Information can then be entered in the same fashion as any *Macwrite* document and printed out much the same way, with the additional option of printing successively only portions of documents, e.g. addresses for mass mailing labels or phone lists.

The applications for this program are virtually unlimited. As a sales tool, Factfinder provides an excellent medium for tracking clients and keeping up with potential new markets. For personnel offices, it can provide an easy way to file comments on potential employees. For editors, it offers a way to stack and sort articles for future consideration and publication.

This is a powerful program that will make an important contribution to the Macintosh business market. Look forward to more great software from this company.

— Ken Goehner

GET ORGANIZED

Published by: Electronic Arts
For: IBM PC and compatible computers

Computer software has become quite sophisticated now that IBM and its compatibles have taken hold of much of the home and office market. The new wave of programs are multifunction, multi-task types: instead of individual programs to handle individual tasks, such as word processing, telecommunications, and data bases, the consumer marketplace is being flooded with composite programs to handle all these needs. Now the question becomes: which of these will best suit my needs today, and which will best suit them in the future?

As I have found, the needs of tomorrow are more expensive than the needs of today. This is not to say that all of the better software packages cost more than the less comprehensive types, but the real expense comes with upgrading computer memory in order to effectively utilize these programs. In fact, some are not even "bootable" without the proper amount of memory installed. Now, for the 256K systems, Electronic Arts presents *Get Organized*.

Get Organized is a "desk-top" approach to the seven most common work utilities for the home or office. It is somewhat of a day-to-day

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BUSINESS SOFTWARE

work or task manager that integrates a text writer, calendar, notepad, telecommunications, address book, index card, and a calculator to help people organize and handle daily written communication and information management tasks. With all of these features, and lots of work space in each, the most basic 256K computer with a single disk drive can manage to operate more efficiently. For those with more power, *Get Organized* will allow you to merge files with some of the other more popular data bases, word processors and electronic spread sheets. Another plus in favor of Electronic Arts' package is that the program can be mounted on hard disk (unlike some of the front runners in the integrated applications field).

The test drive of the system proved to be quite impressive, considering the fact that I have used other, more comprehensive, systems. The word processor is simple and basic. There are no frills; in fact, it is very similar to the *Cut and Paste* package previously released by Electronic Arts. However, I used it along with the notepad feature in order to generate this article and found it to be trouble free.

The Address Book is a mini data base which interacts with all other functions of the package. EA calls it an Electronic Rolodex (TM). Your address book is automatically alphabetized and can be combined with the word processor for a mail merge (with only two function-key strokes) or printing mailing labels. With the proper modem and utilities set-up, the address book can even dial the telephone numbers via the telecommunications feature.

Get Organized uses an Index Card filing system as its answer to a data base manager. Although the maximum field size is 20, and a maximum of 40 characters per field are allowed, the relative search and select features are as good as most data bases found within other integrated packages. I found the Index Card portion of *Get Organized* the most restricted and probably the most detrimental to the over-all effectiveness of the system. With its size limitations, I found this just as frustrating as a spread sheet without enough cells to properly calculate the work.

Of all the functions of *Get Organized*, I thought the Calendar, with an internal structure of dates up to the year 2060 A.D., was the most impressive. It allows for as many as 60 repetitive date reminders, with others, such as New Year's, Independence Day, and Christmas, already built in. It will easily track and post recurring events we are all faced with in life, such as routine meetings. The "things to do" that you post to the calendar are automatically brought to your attention each time you boot the system, as long as you take the time to enter the time and date prompts at the beginning of each work session. The system features a print-out of your up-coming events structured around any time frame you desire.

Some of the lesser-used portions of the program are the Notepad and Calculator. As with the other functions, these can be brought to the screen at any time with one key-stroke; the Notepad for jotting down an idea for later recall, and the Calculator for instant computation (and you don't have to use the Number Lock key).

Get Organized is produced with the same high quality and easy-to-understand documentation as other Electronic Arts software. A function key overlay is provided, and these keys are the same for each of the seven modules. To assist the user, there are on-screen help and status lines. One final consideration in selecting an integrated applications package like this is price. If it fills your needs, its suggested retail of $199 is only 25% of the price of some packages that do only a little more.

— Doug Pencille

THE TAX ADVANTAGE

Written by: Harry Koons and Henry Hilton
Published by: Continental Software
For: Apple II+, IIe, Atari, IBM PC/XT, C-64, TI Prof, Epson QX-10

This program is for anyone in the United States who has an income. If the IRS has ever audited you for a small math error, or if you ever pondered whether you should purchase a computer this year or wait for next year, consider getting this program. Armed with this software, you can fend off the IRS monster with more ease than you ever thought possible, and make some of those simple decisions you used to think were so difficult. Even if all of your taxes are done by a tax consultant, with this program you can walk into his office having a better idea of the potential outcome.

Actually, *The Tax Advantage* is a big help because it is written in Plain English. The numbering sequence follows the numbers on the various IRS forms, so it is easy to reference the IRS tax tables and aids. Possibly the biggest advantage is the program's ability to model your current tax year. Add to this their yearly updates and you have a valuable software package for your home or small business.

— Don Hamilton

IBM FILING ASSISTANT

IBM REPORTING ASSISTANT

Published by: IBM Assistant Series, Productivity Family
For: IBM PC, PC Jr., XT, and Compatibles (Requires 128K RAM, and Printer)

The *IBM Filing Assistant* and *IBM Reporting Assistant* are separate software packages designed to work together. The *Filing Assistant* is the primary package in this data/report combination. The set-up and entry of information into the data base is very simple and well documented. There are illustrated examples in the text and an on-screen help mode. The data base is flexible as to size and type of entries, with the search and retrieval of information being fast and flexible, while not being limited to the order in which it was entered. The amount of information contained within any file is limited only to available memory of the system. This is also the reason for rapid retrieval of information, as the system will search only the memory and not the disk.

The software will support dual or single drive systems, fixed disk systems, color or non-color monitors, other keyboards, and a wide range of printers. There is a built-in set-up program which will customize the system to the user's hardware configuration.

The IBM *Reporting Assistant* is no more than an extension of the *Filing Assistant* program. It allows the user to produce tabular reports of the information contained within the *Filing Assistant*. A report can have up to 20 vertical columns, and the system helps with the layout of each page in order to best utilize the available space.

Although the software is simple to use and understand, both packages could have been combined into one and made for a much better marketing strategy by IBM. The expense of purchasing two separate packages in order to dump your data to a printer in a defined order seems a waste. In the highly competitive software marketplace, there are no fewer than a dozen data base management systems with more capabilities as far as storage, flexibility, and report generation.

— Doug Pencille

EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

U.S. ADVENTURE

Published by: First Star Software Inc. in affiliation with Warner Software, Inc.
For: Commodore 64, Apple II, IBM PC, Atari

One of the truly difficult tasks for both elementary school teachers and students alike is the teaching of what are called "basics," the starting data bases of knowledge that allows us to carry on in our intellectual growth and development. We start with reading, writing and arithmetic and move on from there. Probably the worst of the "basics" involves the beginning study of Social Science. In particular, many people find that U.S. history and geography pose particular problems since their "basics" tend to be rather dry names, dates, and places. Many young students just don't find these subjects and their endless series of drills very exciting and, as a result, Social Science grades tend to rapidly fall. In an interesting attempt to overcome these problems, First Star Software has produced an educational software package called *U.S. Adventure*. This package, which runs on a variety of computer

EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

systems, appears to have been produced as a drill aid for U.S. geography and history.

The game, if you would call it that, takes the user(s) on a trip around the U.S.A. with questions about statehood, people, events, and dates being posed in a "trivia" format. The first thing that a user does, after booting the system, is to travel to the states in the order that they were admitted to the Union. In each state, the user is allowed to "pick-up" events and "carry them along" (up to ten events at a time). Picking up a historically incorrect date will cause you to lose all the events you are currently carrying. Whenever you wish, you may then set a date in history (by year) for each event you carry. You can take events from states and enter the Time Tunnel where you can really increase your score. You will note a year displayed in the center of your screen. If this date matches one in your inventory, your score can increase by up to 600 points. Scoring 9000 points and above allows the user's name to be added to the "honor roll" of the program. Movement between states and incorrect answers on the time questions can cost points. Remember, state travel should be minimized in order to achieve the best possible score.

On the whole, *U.S. Adventure* is an excellent piece of educational software geared toward a grade-school audience. My only real complaint is that the designer(s) appears to put too much weight on political and personal events, ignoring to a great degree such important things as America's involvement in wars, and the Industrial Revolution. As an example, I find it difficult to believe that the Three Mile Island mishap is one of the five most important events in the history of Pennsylvania, while the Battle of Gettysburg is ignored. Therefore, this package should probably be used more for its value as a drill than as a teaching aid.

— John Gresham

GRAPHICS SOFTWARE

PERIPHERAL VISION

Published by: Futurehouse, Inc.
For: Atari, Commodore 64 and VIC 20

I recently reviewed the Edumate Light Pen, also from Futurehouse, Inc., and griped a bit about the features that seemed to be missing from the basic package. All of these omissions appear to be rectified with the issuance of *Peripheral Vision*. This one is subtitled, "An advanced graphics package for use with the Edumate light pen," and it certainly is!

Some art/graphics software has capability in various modes or features such as color control, fill, "paintbrush" width, shape generation and so on. *Peripheral Vision* does all of these, plus zoom, copy, print and what they call "texture" for filling any desired space on the screen, not to mention a solid color fill. Textures (there are 35 pre-defined ones, or you can custom design 6 more of your own at a time) are made up of 2 primary colors plus a background color. The primary colors can be changed to any colors while the program is running. To try this out, I made up a little sketch of a Scotsman and then changed the colors and patterns on his kilt, making it look like different tartans. Fun!

The program is menu driven from the screen by pointing the light pen at an icon for the mode you want and pressing the light pen button. A picture of a disk lets you LOAD or SAVE, a water faucet and bucket cues you to FILL with a texture or solid color, a microscope selects ZOOM to magnify an area of the screen, and so on.

You can dump the screen to your printer, do mirror-image or kaleidoscope effects, change the pen accuracy, select line width, texture, or colors. A second level menu lets you access and manipulate various computer-drawn shapes, including the complete Commodore character set.

Once you familiarize yourself with the options and commands, you will find that you can do more than you thought you could as an artist. I do wish the triggering mode of the pen could be controlled a little better and more reliably, especially on the color TV. It seems a bit easier for me to draw using the standard screen colors, then change color to whatever I want, instead of drawing directly in color. Turning off the automatic controls on the TV also seems to help.

Saved screens can be used in almost any other program you write, if you are fairly capable as a programmer. You can relocate the screen information to a memory location that doesn't interfere with the other program, then LOAD and RUN it. Full (although sketchy - the entire manual is only 14 small pages long) instructions for doing this are provided.

All in all, *Peripheral Vision* seems a complete art and graphics program for the Commodore 64. I am still enjoying experimenting with different ways to use the various features of the package.

— Ed Shurtleff

PERIPHERALS

KOALAPAD TOUCH TABLET

Koala Technologies Corporation
For: Apple II, Commodore 64, VIC-20, IBM PC, Atari
$125.00

The KoalaPad is a really neat, low-cost touch tablet, and it comes with *KoalaPainter*™, the graphics drawing program, which can be described as "fun!"

The pad is conveniently small, measuring only 6 inches by 8 inches, and fits easily in your hand or on your lap. You draw on the front of the pad with your finger or the plastic stylus provided and the cursor moves on the screen. Two buttons are provided on the top of the pad which are used in the graphics program to switch between the menu screen and the graphics screen or to choose an item from the menu. On the menu screen you can choose among a variety of drawing commands, brush sets, and colors. You choose these commands by using the stylus and the pad to move the cursor to the command and then pushing the button. Drawing progresses rapidly by alternating between actually drawing on the pad and then flipping to the menu to change color or brush styles. By carefully drawing and erasing (redrawing using the background color) your picture is developed.

The width, shape and color of the drawing lines can be changed from the menu. Also provided are commands to automatically draw points, lines, rays, boxes and circles. To draw a circle, first choose the circle from the menu, then press the button to return to your picture. Next, place the stylus where you want the center of the circle and press the button to mark this spot. Then as you move the stylus away from the spot, the circle grows from that point. When you have the size of circle that you want you push the button and the circle remains. Also, any closed area can be filled with color. Drawings of scenes, designs, pictures, diagrams, charts, graphs, etc., can be drawn on the screen, saved to disk, recalled to the screen, printed on a graphics-capable printer, or used in another program. For freehand sketching, the program is excellent. Pictures can be quickly and easily produced. With a color monitor or color T.V. set, drawing is even more fun. Children as well as adults will enjoy the program. For detailed drawings, such as for house plans, intricate diagrams or lettering, the program is exasperating because of the resolution of the pad. The program does provide a MAGNIFY command and a SCALED command which help, but trying to position and hold the cursor on an exact spot on the screen is difficult.

For the price ($125.00), the pad with the graphics program is a very good value. The program is easy to learn and to use for the hobbyist. It is just not a professional drafting tool for the engineer, draftsman or illustrator, nor was it meant to be. Other programs are being developed which utilize the KoalaPad, so the pad is not just a drawing tablet, but can be expanded from a growing list of programs.

— Dave and Rose Johnson

GAME SOFTWARE

THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Published by: Infocom Inc., 1984
For: IBM PC, Apple II, TRS-80, Commodore 64, ATARI and most MS-DOS systems
Based upon Douglas Adams' book by the same name.

Infocom Inc. has been making quite a name for itself lately with a rather unique line of interactive fiction software. Previous titles,

Planetfall and *Sorcerer*, have sold well and been well received. The latest entry into the marketplace, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, is almost sure to become a bestseller. The reasons are quite simple. By merging its proven interactive fiction system with the stories created by Douglas Adams, Infocom has created a product that allows the user to romp through one of the most popular science fiction/fantasy storylines of the last decade.

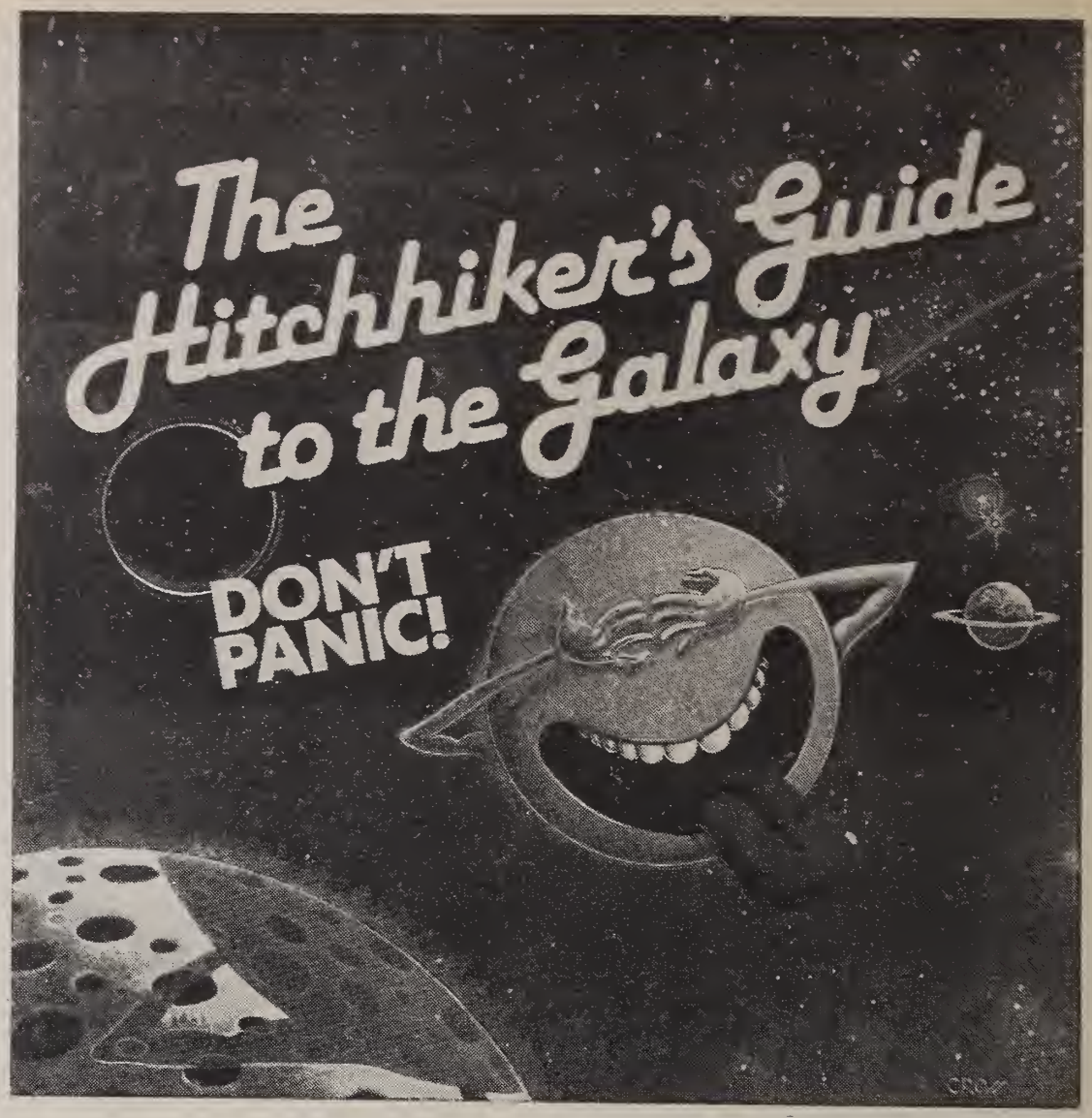
For those of you not familiar with the story told in the *Hitchhiker's Guide* trilogy, the story concerns the adventures of a confused earthling by the name of Arthur Dent. Arthur is the sole survivor of the demolition of the planet Earth. It may be of some worth to know that in this story, Earth is accidentally demolished to make way for a hyperspace freeway bypass. With such total disregard for reality and the Laws of Physics, it is easy to see why poor Arthur is so confused. With the help of his alien friend, Ford Prefect, he merrily hitchhikes his way from one odd adventure to another.

The game format for *Hitchhiker's Guide* is really quite simple. The program provides the user with guidance in the form of situational text. The user then inputs the required action to the program and a resolution is generated. The unique nature of this program is that all communication between the program and user is done in basic, friendly English. The supporting documentation claims the *Hitchhiker's Guide* has a usable vocabulary of over 800 words. Within the limits of the available words, a great many things can be done by the player.

An example of a "chapter" of play in the *Hitchhiker's Guide* might include the character(s) regaining consciousness, examining the environment, discovering any problems and opportunities (if any), and attempting to move on to the next action (or maybe just survive). The user controls Arthur and all that he carries, does, and says. While this makes for a lot of action and excitement, it does tend to limit the user options if Arthur is injured or passes out. In several examples, I had to go through 15-25 play cycles to finally arrive at the proper response to get Arthur back on his feet.

A truly unique feature of *Hitchhiker's Guide* is the Guide itself. By "consulting the guide," the user is able to access any number of useful pieces of information. In fact, Arthur's survival will depend upon proper use of guide information.

The one major problem with the game is that the supporting documentation, while slick and attractive, is not very helpful as a player aid. The most extreme weakness is the lack of a list of the entire 800+ word vocabulary that the program utilizes. This would have provided a great deal more satisfaction than the assortment of *Hitchhiker's Guide* paraphernalia supplied in the package. In addition, most of the examples of play are not from this, but a previous Infocom interactive fiction game. While Infocom claims that learning the game should be viewed as a puzzle, the only puzzle to me is why a company with the reputation of Infocom would skimp on a product as good as *Hitchhiker's Guide*.



In spite of this, *Hitchhiker's Guide* is an excellent game with a great deal going for it. In addition to an outstanding subject, the execution from the original book trilogy to an interactive software package is nothing short of super. This package should not only appeal to the many die-hard fans of the original *Hitchhiker's Guide* book series, but even to those who have no concept of who or what Zaphod Beeblebrox is. Four and a half stars for this one.

— John Gresham

KARATEKA

Designed by: Jordan Mechner
Published by: Broderbund Software, Inc.
For: Apple II and IIe and IIc, Commodore 64

Bruce Lee fans take note — fighting Droids have finally learned karate! Kick and punch your way through the vicious warriors and rescue your princess from enslavement by the warlord who has burned your village and scattered your family.

Essentially a scrolling video game, *Karateka* features outstanding animation. The combatants move smoothly and realistically. A punch or kick involves movement of the entire body, giving the impression of joints and muscles working in unison to deliver a deadly blow. No crude programmer's figures, these characters appear to be the work of an artist with a trained knowledge of human anatomy. Jordan Mechner, the game's author, is actually a student at Yale University and a former karate student. He used film clips of karate fighters as a guide for the moves shown in the game. Even the screams heard in the game are actual recorded vocals of a black belt expert.

The object of *Karateka* is for the young karate master to travel through the warlord's fortress and free his bride-to-be from the dungeon to which she is confined during the opening demonstration. As you advance through different levels which are delineated by gates, your opponents increase in skill until you face Akuma, the warlord himself. It is important to physically move from one level to the other, as each level appears to have an endless number of warriors to face as long as you stay there.

Combat is limited to six blows: low, middle, or high punches or kicks. I thought I had figured out the right combination of blows, timing my moves and, in general, trying to finesse my way through in keeping with the spirit of karate. Advancing to the middle level after several tries, I turned the keyboard over to a friend's nine-year-old son. Using a Space Invaders approach of punching keys as rapidly as possible, he reached the third level in only two attempts. Hidden under the splendid graphics is a game of simple strategy. Still, the illusion is good enough that I recommend losing oneself in the fantasy.

— Matthew Berry

DUNZHIN

Designed by: Randall Don Masteller
Published by: Screenplay
For: IBM PC, Apple II+, IIe, IIc

This game, another Dungeons and Dragons type adventure using a maze format, is designed for one player who must maneuver through each of several depths to a specific target randomly selected at the beginning of the game. The player must then return to the entrance of the maze to successfully complete the game.

You enter the maze and use the four primary compass directions to move about. Initially, only the entrance to the maze is visible. The remainder of the maze becomes visible step by step as your character progresses through its corridors while bouncing off unexpected walls. The graphics are useful, but simple. The characters are blocks with rudimentary appendages, the walls are blocks with occasional doors to enter sections containing rooms, and the rooms themselves are merely represented by letters of the alphabet from A to O. Most rooms contain treasure, while others will repair weapons or armor, recharge magical wands, regenerate weakened warriors, etc. . . .

During your journey, you will encounter several obstacles such as holes in the floor, trip wires, fogs, slippery floors, falling nets, thieves, teleportation, and the like. Although these minor nuisances usually are not fatal or can be avoided with a quick reflex, they do more to slow the progress of the game than to add excitement or adventure. The *deadly* foes are the eighteen monsters which you will encounter. They are likely to show themselves within a couple of moves of entering or exiting a room and can appear in groups of two or more. On one occasion, this warrior encountered five skeletons which very fairly waited their turn as they were fought off one by one. Unfortunately, such a beating had been inflicted on me by the third skeleton that the fourth landed a fatal blow to end the game.

You can hide or bribe the monsters or you can run from them if random chance allows you to be lucky. Your alternate defense is to wave the monsters into oblivion with your magic wand or go into battle (providing your wand has not been discharged or your sword has not been broken).

As a warrior, you become more powerful as you gain experience through actual battle. This advances you to higher levels which are different from the several depths of the maze, and increases your chances of survival and success. After numerous games, I attained level nine in twenty before meeting doom and complete frustration. I never reached the target, so the excitement that a seasoned warrior might experience remains undescribable.

I tested this game on an Apple IIc. The documentation is readable and helpful, but not accurately updated for Apple computers. The player can access different screens for the status of his warrior or a list of commands and battle targets, but not at critical times such as when confronted with a monster. The player may save either the character or the game in progress and is advised to do so frequently to make any substantial progress in the game. There are certain features of the game which the player can control, such as sound and the speed of messages displayed. The game's complexity is stated as five on a scale of one to ten, but eight is probably more accurate.

The game can be very frustrating, tiring, and lengthy, and therefore not enjoyable for the average gamester. However, it may be the perfect challenge for the player with extreme patience and a great deal of experience and dedication for maze games.

— Bruce Cannelongo

USER GROUP NOTES

Alameda/Contra Costa County Macintosh users will certainly want to check out the East Bay Macintosh User's Group, affectionately known as EBMUG. It meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the El Cerrito Public Library at 6510 Stockton Street in El Cerrito. You don't have to be a member to attend, and the prevailing atmosphere is helpful and non-intimidating, much like the Mac itself.

The January 15th meeting featured an extensive discussion of assorted software being created for Macintosh, both commercial and public domain (for more on this subject, see this issue's cover story). Plans are also afoot to acquire, for members' use, a Thunderscanner device which will transform almost any visual material (photographs, type, etc.) into *MacPaint* images. As certain members gleefully demonstrated, this device *will* work on your centerfold collection. The evening closed with a stirring rendition of "Happy Birthday," celebrating the Mac's first year of existence, followed by enthusiastic consumption of a chocolate-mocha cake, sculpted in the form of a Macintosh and complete with a chocolate disk.

Susan Copeland of the TRS-80 Computer Society of Diablo Valley wants to extend an invitation to would-be members. "We have found that there are many, many frustrated owners of Radio Shack Computers out there who do not know of our Club's existence," she writes, "and we would appreciate any publicity so that they can find us." She continues "We are a totally non-profit organization founded in 1983 for mutual assistance in learning to operate and enjoy the benefits of a personal home computer. We have members of all ages from sub-teens to those in the Golden Age of Retirement."

The club welcomes all prospective members, including those out of the area; its current membership includes people of a wide range of interests and experience, from complete beginners to a veteran programmer who worked on UNIVAC. Annual dues are $20.00, with the proceeds being used to finance a monthly newsletter and to set up a Club Bulletin Board. Also in the works is The Ellis E. Champlin Library, a memorial to a recently deceased member. The TRS-80 Society offers a one-time 3-month membership for prospective members who want to familiarize themselves with the club's advantages before making a long-term commitment. The club meets at the Willow Creek Center in Concord, 1026 Mohr Lane, on the second Tuesday of each month; doors open at 7 pm, and the meeting runs from 7:30 to 9:30. Contact Susan or Roy Copeland at (415) 372-7003 for more information.

Alan Magary of Epson Users of San Francisco sent along a copy of his organization's newsletter *Valnews*, which is packed with instructive information on hardware, software, and corporate skulduggery. Also included is a summary of their recent membership survey, which finds, among other things, that "the typical user/member is most likely a California male professional who bought a QX-10 in Fall 1983 and considers himself an intermediate in experience. He uses Valdocs, PeachCalc, and List Manager most often, but word-processing is by far the most popular application." If this sounds like a group that could do you some good, contact Alan at Epson Users/*Valnews*, 904 Irving Street, Suite 271, San Francisco 94122.

Distress Call Department: Greg Lucido of Long Beach has acquired a Fujitsu Micro 16 and is looking for a user's group or BBS. If you're a fellow Fujitsu user, know of such a user group, or have an interest in forming one, contact Greg at 5199 E. Pacific Coast Highway #606, Long Beach, CA 90804. Also, Rufo Sims of Oakland is looking for a Commodore user group in the area. If you can help, call him at (415) 584-6231.

The Silicon Valley Cromemco users will meet at MCM Enterprises, 215 Hamilton Ave. in Palo Alto, on February 12. Call Emily Ott at (415) 854-5818 for info.

This month the MicroTimes Roving Speaker Squad visits the monthly soiree of East Bay F.O.G. (First Osborne Group). Stay tuned for a full report.

And, as always, we invite your group to take advantage of our free user group listings; other computer organizations and BBS's are welcome (and free!) too. We'll also be glad to publicize your upcoming events — let us know by the third week of the month *preceding* the event. Bear in mind that our issues come out around the second week of the month and give us an extra month's notice if your event is in roughly the same time frame. Nobody likes to hear about that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity a week late.... Black-and-white glossy pictures are also welcome. Send all info to MicroTimes, 5951 Canning St., Oakland CA 94609, Attention Mary Eisenhart. Or call (415) 652-3810.

USER GROUP LISTINGS

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

SOUTH BAY APPLE III USER GROUP
The Apple III is alive and well in Southern California. Come join us on the IIIrd Tuesday of each month. Product demos and discussions and more. Meeting address 1000 Victoria Avenue, Room #SC-E157, Carson, 7:30 pm, IIIrd Tuesday. Contact Gary, P.O. Box 432, Redondo Beach, CA 90277, (213) 316-7738.

AT&T 6300
West LA: AT&T 6300 or 8086 compatible (desk pro) group forming. Contact Miles Hillis, (213) 472-3522, leave name and interest.

CLUB 64
National user group. Monthly newsletter, BBS, group purchasing, public domain software, much more. Contact: Robert Johnson, (213) 925-4049.

COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURS ORGANIZATION (CEO)
Business networking group meets around SF area. Invests in new products, markets, brainstorms. Share info. on tech and non-tech business issues. 4 meeting locations, various week nights. Contact Dr. Crandall, P.O. Box 2781, San Rafael, CA 94912.

CURSOR CLUB — EPSON
402 W. Arrow Highway, Suite 6
San Dimas, CA. 91773
(714) 599-8361
Bulletin Board: (714) 592-6316

FOOTHILL EPSON USER GROUP
Meets fourth Tuesday of the month at 3132 Foothill Blvd., La Crescenta. All types of micros are welcome. Demonstrations, discussions, newsletters, BBS, etc. For info contact: Jerry Jamriska, 2960 Hawkridge Dr., La Crescenta, CA 91214. (818) 248-7133.

EPSON USERS GROUP OF ORANGE COUNTY
6075 Jeffrey Mark Street
Cypress, CA. 90630
(213) 414-4817

EPSON USERS OF SAN DIEGO
P.O. Box 87448
San Diego, CA. 92138
(619) 560-7604

HIGH DESERT EPSON USERS GROUP
933 Cottonwood Drive
Barstow, CA. 92311
(619) 256-3541

PSC/QX
2934 Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica, CA. 90403
(213) 453-4535
Bulletin Board: (213) 474-4952

SOUTH BAY EPSON USERS GROUP
1115 Cerise Avenue
Torrance, CA. 90503
(213) 328-9916
Bulletin Board: (213) 618-1940

GAMENET
Bulletin Board System. BBS is devoted 100% to gaming subjects. 24 hours, 20 boards, 10 D&D/RPG boards, Alkahest, professional book reviews, Unending Story, Adventurers Training Ground, Game Hint, etc. Sysop: L.J. Phone: (213) 541-8039.

WANT USER'S GROUP INFO
Have Fujitsu Micro 16, am looking for a user's group or BBS. Contact Greg Lucido, 5199 E. Pacific Coast Highway, Long Beach, CA 90804.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

CLUB OF HEWLETT-PACKARD HAND-HELD USERS (CHHU)

The true personal computer is small enough to always be conveniently with the user. CHHU, pronounced "chew," is dedicated to the ultimate personal computer. Membership is $30/yr. You will receive 10 issues of the CHHU Chronicle. Meetings are announced in the CHHU Chronicle, or contact Richard J. Nelson, 2545 W. Camden Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92704. (714) 754-7757.

OCNUG

Orange County NEC users group — dedicated to NEC-APC computers, CP/M-86 & MS-DOS. Always room for any experience level. Meets 3 pm, third Saturday of the month, 6642 Lenore, Garden Grove, CA 92645. Call John Bingel at (714) 897-7656 for more info.

SOUTH BAY COLOR COMPUTER CLUB

TRS-80, TDP-100, Dragon. Meets third Friday of the month at Mercury Savings, 22939 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance. Info: Andrew Corlett, 1435 W. 172nd St., Gardena, CA 90247. (213) 538-8394.

LA 99ER COMPUTER CLUB

TI 99/4A support, classes and SIGs, large software library, monthly newsletter. Demonstrations, bulk purchase discounts on hardware, software and books. A good group to join. Meetings at Torrance Public Library, 3031 Torrance Blvd., Torrance, CA. 4th Wednesday of the month, 7 pm. Contact Terrie Masters, 148 S. Maple Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, (213) 271-6930.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO APPLE CORE

Meets every third Saturday of the month at Fort Mason, Bldg. C, Room 100 at 10 am. New products and innovations are featured for Apple II, Apple III, Macintosh and Lisa. Public domain library, SIGs, tech help, newsletter. $20 per year membership. Info: SF Apple Core, 1515 Sloat Blvd., Suite 2, San Francisco, CA 94132. (415) 566-2342 (voice), (415) 474-8608 (BBS/modem).

SPCA (SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO APPLES)

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Apples is a club for owners of Apple, Apple-compatible (Franklin, etc.) and Macintosh personal computers. It meets at 7:30 pm on the last Wednesday of the month at Thornton Jr. High School, on Thornton Ave. at Dusterberry, in Fremont. Contact SPCA Publicity Chairman Milton Buck, 5246 Channel Drive, Newark, or call (415) 794-2822 for more info.

ABACUS (Atari Bay Area Computer Users Society)

All ATARI users or prospective users are welcome. Membership ($15/year) provides public domain software, low cost blank disks, monthly newsletter, group prices on hardware and software, help from experts, low cost classes for beginners. Meetings first Saturday of the month, Fort Mason, SF, Room 300, Bldg. C, 10 am-2 pm. Contact Bill Zinn, P.O. Box 1823, Mill Valley, CA 94941. (415) 753-8483.

A.C.M.E. (ATARI COMPUTER — MARIN ENTHUSIASTS)

Meets monthly in Marin, third Thursday evening monthly from 7 pm on, Gallinas School, 177 N. San Pedro Rd., San Rafael. Contact Bruce Frank, (415) 435-6020, P.O. Box 222, Tiburon, CA 94920.

DIABLO VALLEY ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS (D.A.C.E.)

Contact Richard C. Foster, Secretary, 3760 Lindero Drive, Concord, CA 94519.

20/64 CLUB

The Cupertino chapter of the 20/64 club for Commodore users meets the second Sunday of each month, Cupertino Public Library, 6 pm. Contact Rex Ackerman, P.O. Box 61063, Sunnyvale, CA 94086. Phone (408) 245-7270.

SAN FRANCISCO COMMODORE USERS GROUP

Public domain library, classes, tech help, in depth demonstrations, monthly newsletters, Epromer, savings on purchases, all this and more. BBS # (415) 567-5046 300 baud. Meeting address 256 Laguna Honda Blvd., San Francisco, 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm. Contact Roger Tierce, 278 27th Ave. #102, SF, CA 94121, (415) 387-0225.

COMPUTER PROFESSIONALS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

P.O. Box 717, Palo Alto, CA 94301. (415) 322-3778.

COMPUTER PROFESSIONALS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (EAST BAY)

902 Rose Ave., Piedmont CA 94611. Contact Bruce Joffe, (415) 768-0288 days, (415) 654-5263 eves.

SILICON VALLEY CROMEMCO USERS

Meets 2nd Tuesday of the month at MCM Enterprises, 215 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA. Call Ken Brown at (415) 327-8080 for details.

SAN FRANCISCO dBASE USER GROUP

For advanced users and programmers. Meets once per month. Membership required for attendance. Contact Frank A. De Coster, 1100 Gough St., San Francisco, CA 94109, (415) 474-6693.

BAY AREA EPSON SALTS — EPSON

125 Del Centro
Millbrae, CA. 94030
(415) 697-0567

EPSON USERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Bay Area Epson group has nationally circulated newsletter *Valnews*; 400 members — mostly QX-10 owners; growing software library. Meetings focus on mutual support, mainly Valdocs and other applications. Meetings first Thursdays, 7 p.m., Fort Mason Center, Bldg. C., Room 205, San Francisco. Contact Alan Magary, 904 Irving St., Suite 271, San Francisco CA 94122, (415) 661-9270.

NAPA VALLEY EPSON USERS GROUP

1307 Hestia Way
Napa, CA. 94558
(707) 253-8727

SANTA ROSA KUG

Owners of Kaypro computers or CP/M systems are invited to join the SRKUG. We conduct seminars and software instruction/training. Come join the fun. Meetings 3rd Thursday of the month at 7 pm. Call for meeting address: James Daniels, 1029 Damon Court, Santa Rosa, CA 95401, (707) 575-8149.

EBMUG (EAST BAY MACINTOSH USER'S GROUP)

Friendly, informal. Public domain software and computer book library. Information exchange. Speakers. Product discounts. Free admission. Meets at El Cerrito Public Library, 6510 Stockton, El Cerrito, CA, third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm. Contact Shep Tamler, 5901 Broadway #7, Oakland, CA 94618, (415) 653-5849.

EAST BAY FOG (First Osborne Group)

Osborne, Kaypro and Morrow. Meets second Wednesday of the month at B&B Electric, 2832 Ford Street, Oakland. 6 pm workshops, 7:30 pm program. For info contact A Central Place, 477 15th St., Room 200, Oakland, CA 94612. (415) 834-7897.

NORTH BAY R2E

Forming user group for R2E System Microcomputer users. Please call (415) 235-1598 for information. First meeting will be held in El Cerrito in early November.

PC-HACKERS (International)

This 300-member, 16-page newsletter-publishing, PC-compatible group began as a Sanyo MSDOS club in March 1984. All PC-compatible owners are welcomed at our monthly First Wednesday meetings at 7 pm in the conference room of San Mateo's Fashion Island (Highway 92, east of 101). Dues: $30. Contact: PC Hackers, 12155 Edgecliff, Los Altos, CA 94022.

SANYO 1100/1200 USER GROUP

of the San Francisco Bay Area, P.O. Box 297, San Mateo, 8-10 pm, every 2nd Friday of month. Send large self-addressed stamped envelope for copy of newsletter.

SANYO MBC 1100-1150

user group now forming in Oakland. Call or write (415) 534-1981, 5885 Bancroft Ave., Oakland 94605 for meeting time and location.

BYTE BANDITS OF AMERICA

TRS-80's workshop computers club — bimonthly meetings — 2nd Saturday and 4th Wednesday of the month. Bring your computers. Free membership. Modem: (408) 374-3974. Meetings at 780 Many Ave., Campbell, CA. For info contact R.W. Brown, (408) 379-2774.

TRS-80 COMPUTER SOCIETY OF DIABLO VALLEY

The purpose of this group is the sharing of information, problem solving, support group, purchasing discounts, support for professional, business and educational users of Radio Shack computers. Out-of-area members welcome. Meetings second Tuesdays of the month, Willow Creek Center, 1026 Mohr Lane, Concord, 7:30-9:30 pm. Doors open at 7. Contact Roy or Sue Copeland, P.O. Box 23438, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523, (415) 372-7003.

SAN FRANCISCO 99ERS

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EAST BAY TIMEX/SINCLAIR USER GROUP (EBZUG)

Timex/Sinclair user group. S/W library and newsletter. Meets at West Branch of Berkeley Public Library at corner of University and San Pablo. Meets 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm. Contact Rick Link, 654 40th St., Richmond, CA 94805, (415) 234-3310.

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USER GROUP LISTINGS

continued from page 39

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Timex/Sinclair user group. S/W library and newsletter. Meets at Peninsula Hospital, 1783 El Camino, Burlingame. Meets 3rd Sunday of the month at 1 pm. Contact George Mockridge, 263 Gateway #107, Pacifica, CA 94044, (415) 359-3198.

SILICON VALLEY TIMEX/SINCLAIR USER GROUP (SVTSUG)
Timex/Sinclair user group. S/W library and newsletter. Meets at Dysan Corp., 5201 Patrick Henry Drive, Santa Clara. Meets last Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. Contact Rita Carr, P.O. Box 4133, Santa Clara, CA 94044-0133, (408) 738-2888 ext. 45.

BAY AREA VECTOR GROUP
Meeting held regularly. Please call to be put on mailing list. You will be informed of next meeting! Contact Peter Tjeerdsma, 764 Cole St. #4, San Francisco, CA 94117. Phone (415) 681-0308.

EAST BAY VICTOR* GROUP
The East Bay Victor* Group (for users of Victor 9000's and ACT Apricot machines) meets at 7 pm the second Wednesday of every month at Monarch Computers, at 863C San Pablo Ave., Albany, CA. Public domain software usually available.

SAN FRANCISCO VICTOR* GROUP
The San Francisco Victor* Group meets at 4 pm the third Sunday of each month at La Bettola di Adolph Restaurant, corner of Broadway and Montgomery. Come early for public domain copying. Contact Darrell Bross, 254 Winding Way, San Francisco, CA 94112, (415) 586-5788.

SOUTH BAY VICTOR* GROUP
The South Bay Victor* Group meets at 7 pm at Computer Insights, 40957 Grimmer Blvd., Fremont, CA. Public domain software is usually available. Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month. Contact John Kimber, 38635 Drexel Court, Fremont, CA 94536, (415) 797-6423.

FRAMEWORK/EDITOR BAY AREA USERS GROUP (FREDBUG)
Purpose of the group is to share programming and applications techniques under FRAMEWORK for the business and technical professional. Call for info on first organizational meeting: Rudi Wiedemann, (408) 730-4159.

CALIFORNIA SOFTWARE ELECTRONIC CONSULTANTS (CAL-SEC)
California Software and Electronic Consultants Network. Support Groups — Workshops — Legal Referral — Newsletter. $30 Membership or SASE to CAL-SEC, 3046 College Ave. #4, Berkeley, CA 94705.

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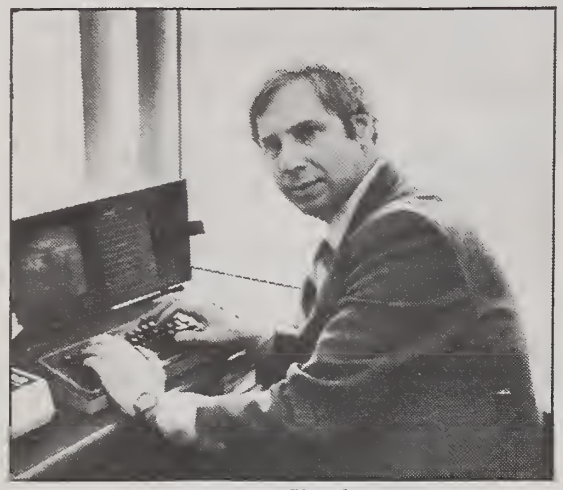

Bob Balan. Photo: Mary Eisenhart

Computer Insights
40957 Grimmer Blvd.
Fremont, CA 94538
(415) 490-0685
416 Town and Country Village
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 244-4080

Back in 1981, Bob Balan, who had been a Victor consultant for 14 years, bought an Osborne. Shortly thereafter, he was having some trouble getting it to drive a printer, and returned to the dealer for advice. The dealer essentially told him that once the computer left the store it wasn't his problem, and Balan was on his own.

Balan reflected that if this was the treatment that someone with experience in the field got, the average customer was probably in dire straits. Therefore, when he started his own business, customer service was his top priority.

Computer Insights, with stores in Fremont and San Jose, is primarily geared to meeting the computer needs of the business user. Although it is the largest Kaypro dealer in the Bay Area, Balan maintains that the primary commitment at Computer Insights is diagnosing and meeting the needs of the customer. "You don't start from hardware, you don't start from software, you start with your problem," he says. "We don't sell computers, we service our clients."

When a client comes to Computer Insights, says Balan, the salespeople work at determining his particular needs — how the office runs, what areas may be helped by automation — and then match them to available hardware and software as economically as possible.

Computer Insights carries an extensive assortment of hardware and software, with a particular emphasis on vertical-market packages. If a client needs something that isn't in stock, it can be special-ordered, with a waiting time of about 2-3 days.

Balan is in the process of negotiating with Kaypro to become a site for the low-cost, much-needed Kaypro Schools, which train users in various computer functions at levels from beginner to advanced. He also makes the store available to local Victor and Kaypro user groups: the Victor group meets on the first Thursday of the month, the Kaypro on the first Tuesday, both at the Fremont store. Call for further information.

— Mary Eisenhart

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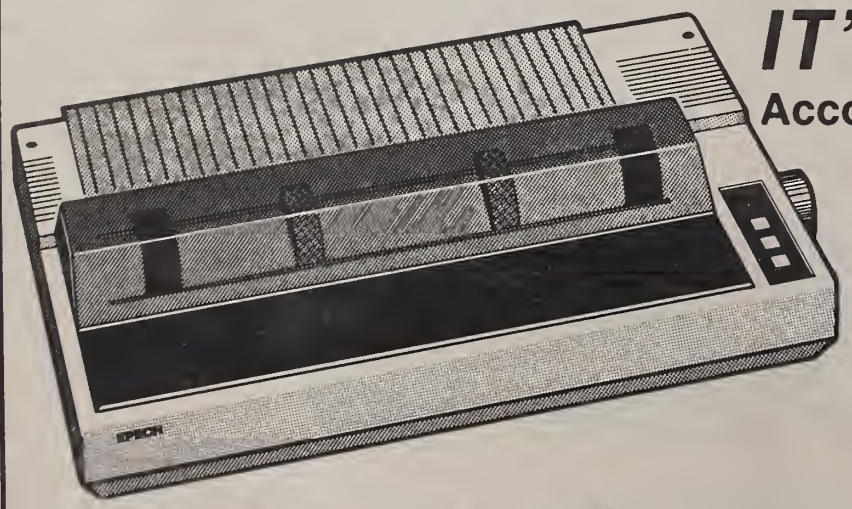

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